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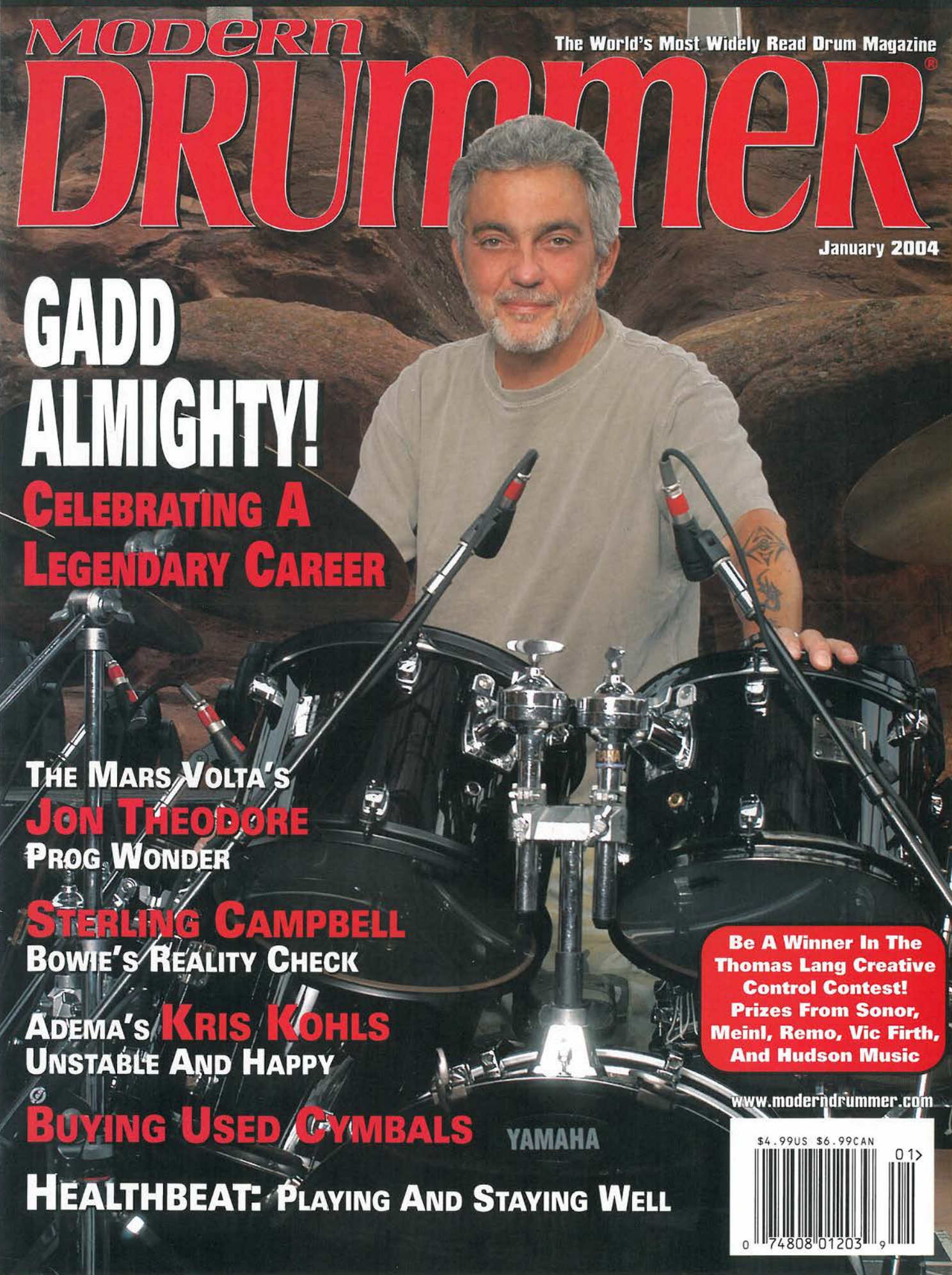

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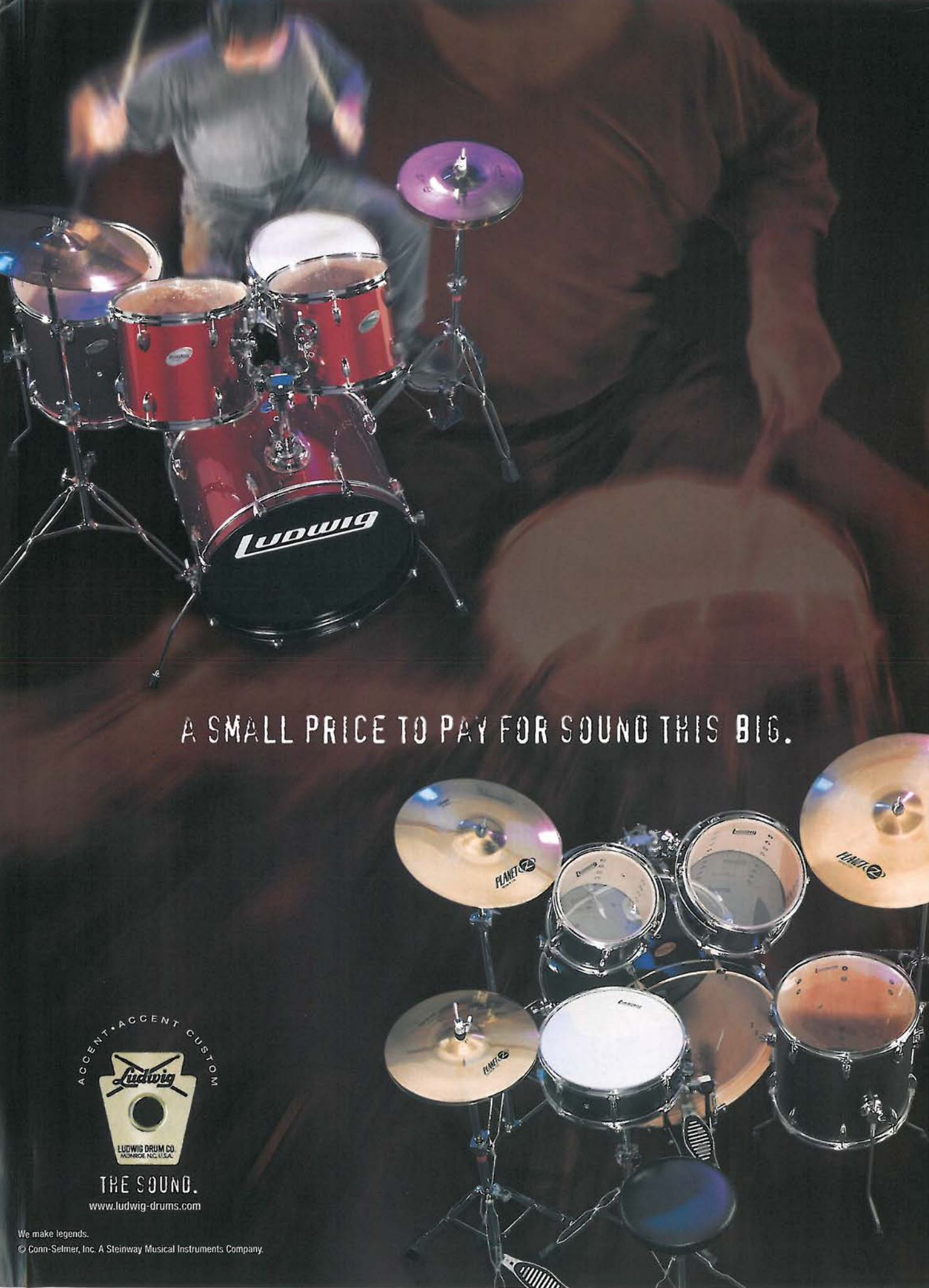
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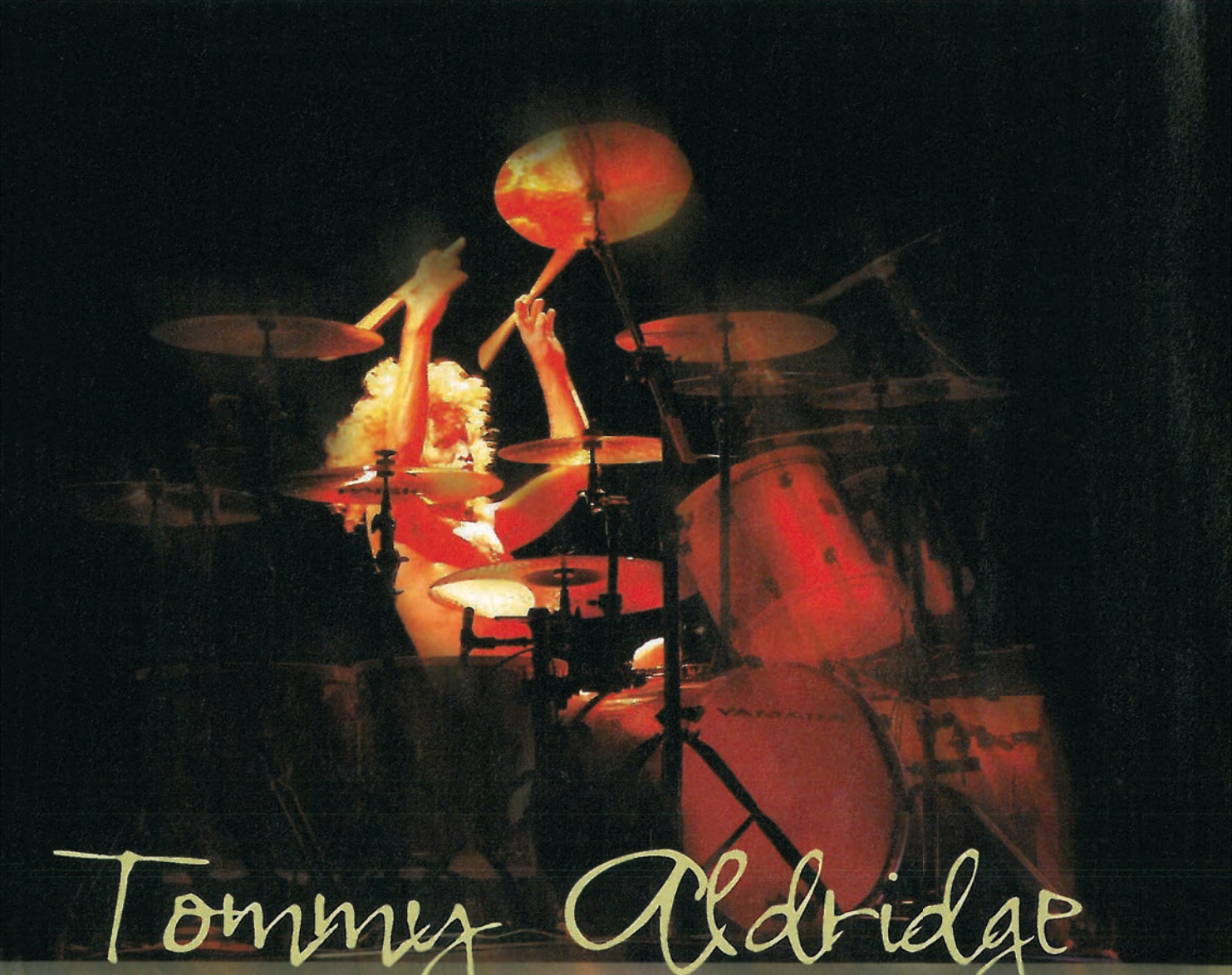

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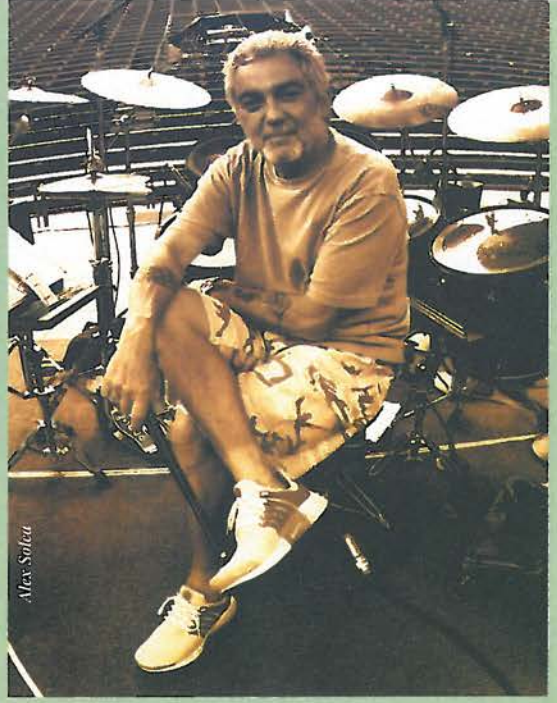

Drumming Superstar
Steve Gadd

No single drummer has inspired more *musicians* over the past thirty years than Steve Gadd. Period. And today, at a point in life where others might consider slowing down, Steve is busier than ever. Jazz great and Gadd pal John Riley gets the master to open up about his amazing career.
by John Riley

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The Mars Volta's
Jon Theodore 66

Prog rock is back with a vengeance, thanks to a few young, hot players stretching the genre's boundaries. One of the most burning drummers on the scene right now is Jon Theodore. No question, this guy can shred.
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Living the life of a rock star isn't all it's cracked up to be. Sterling Campbell has had an impressive twenty-year career supporting such names as Cyndi Lauper, Soul Asylum, Duran Duran, and David Bowie. But he hasn't always been happy---until now.
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Metal drummers can sometimes fall into predictable patterns. But that's not the case with Kris Kohls. Sure, Adema sells a ton of records, but this drummer is adding his own twist to the tried-and-true.
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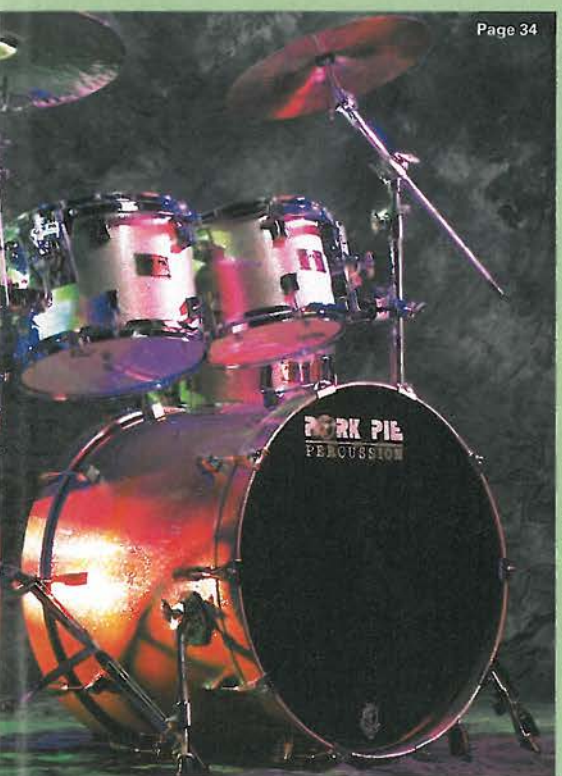

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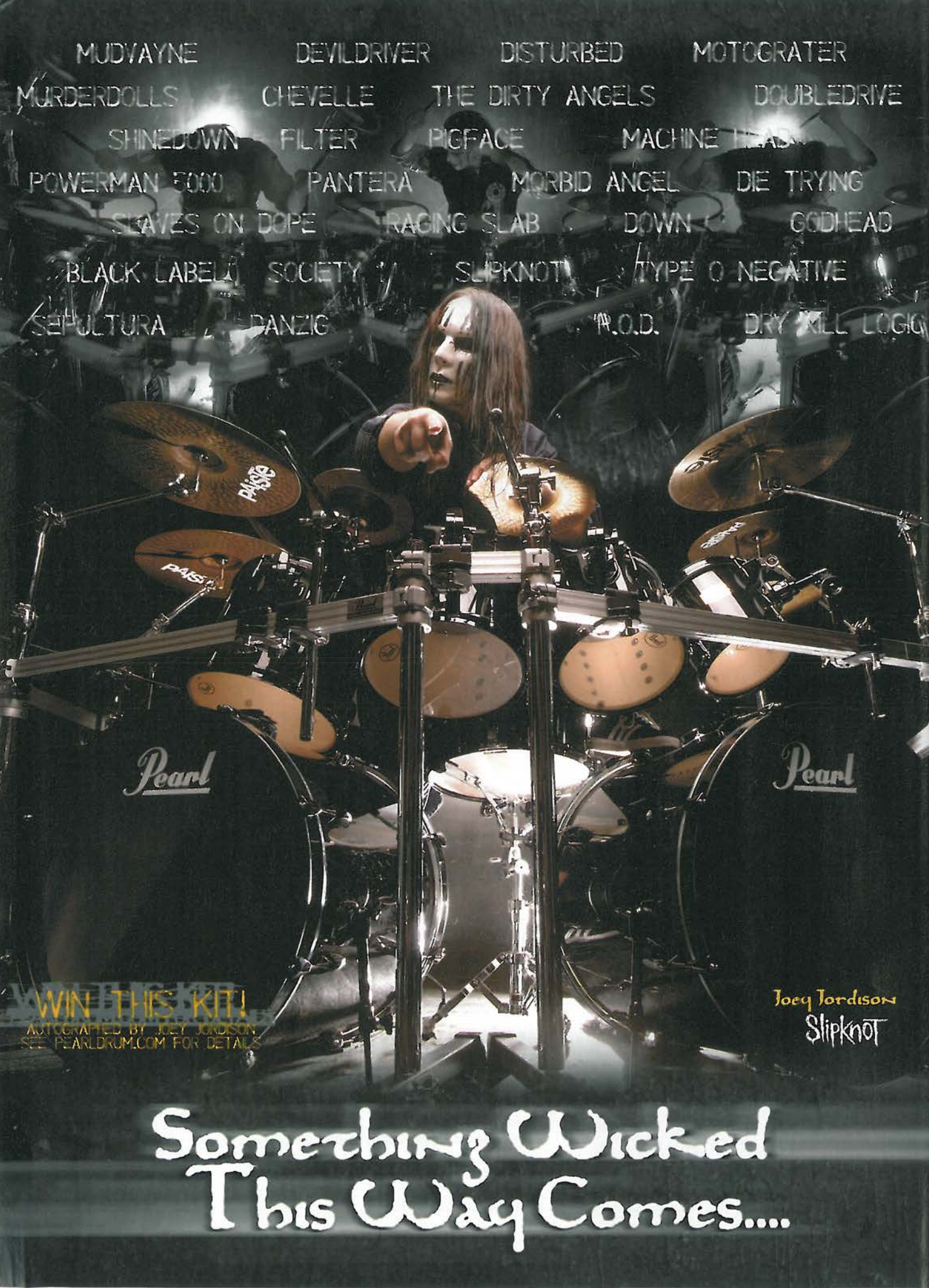
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AN **EDITOR'S** OVERVIEW

Frankenstein Drumming

We've created a monster—or at least technology has. I'm talking about the digital editing of recorded tracks. If you've been in a pro or even home studio in the last few years, you know what's going on. Musicians are recording their parts...and then the editing begins. Grooves are massaged, miss-hits smoothed over, sections of songs repositioned, and mistakes removed. With some records these days, the editing process takes more time than the actual recording.

Recently I was talking with master session and tour drummer Kenny Aronoff. (He's currently on the road with Michelle Branch.) Kenny has been one of the "big dawgs" in the studios for years. He knows the top engineers and producers, and he's seen first-hand how technology has changed things.

Kenny was saying that on many sessions these days, he's given *very* little time to record a track. In fact, producers seem to be satisfied with a performance before Kenny is. Because of the technology, they know they can "adjust" anything they want to later on.

In another example of the "beauty" of digital editing, for years Kenny would be called in to "ghost drum" for a group's drummer. Thanks to digital editing, less-experienced players are now recording tracks that are being completely "rebuilt" by digital engineers. Talk about Frankenstein drumming! (By the way, some drum manufacturers are now requiring live board tapes of potential endorsers to see whether or not they can actually play.)

I've had some personal experience with all this. A band I was working with decided it was time to make a record. They hired a name engineer and booked a studio. The sessions went okay, but then the editing began. "What if we cut that guitar solo in half?" "Let's remove that drum fill." "Can we use pitch correction to fix the vocals?" And on and on. Two years later (and thousands of dollars spent), they're *still* working on the recording.

I suppose I'm sounding like an old codger: "It was much better back in the day, when we had to *play* a good take." Don't get me wrong. I don't have a problem with technology—as long as it's being used creatively and not as a crutch.

Bill Miller

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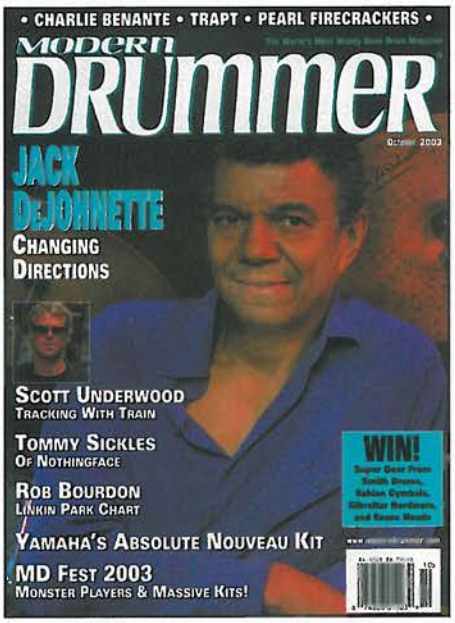
Jack DeJohnette

Many thanks for putting Jack DeJohnette on your October cover, and for the outstanding feature interview. I've had the privilege to see Jack perform several times, but a drum solo I saw him play in Champaign, Illinois in the mid-'70s was the most incredible performance I have



ever witnessed. I think the tune was called "Fantastic." Staring at the ceiling, Jack played a slow, insistent, hypnotic funk beat, unaltered, for three or four minutes straight. Then, slowly but surely, little variants started occurring. By the end of the solo it seemed like the ceiling had opened up, the ocean was pouring in, and Jack was just some kind of marionette at the drums. The avalanche of sound I was hearing did not seem to jive with Jack's movements. I have never experienced anything like it before or since.

Readers who have not seen Jack live should obtain a video called *Legends Of Jazz Drumming, Volume 2*. Jack helps narrate it and also appears in a clip from his Charles Lloyd days, just *tearing up* his little drumkit in yet another beautiful solo. Truly "Fantastic."

Don Berman
Seattle, WA

Here's a "no-brainer" for readers of *Modern Drummer*: Jack DeJohnette for the *MD* Hall Of Fame in 2004. Jack is a drumming giant who gets overlooked far too much. It's great to see him as *MD*'s cover artist. Good work!

Marc D. White
via Internet

Drumming For God

Editor's note: Rarely has a single article generated as much positive response as did Philip Hendrickson's October '03 Jobbing Drummer *column titled "Drumming For God." Here's just a small sampling of that response.*

Thanks to Philip Hendrickson for his article on drumming in church bands. I volunteered two years ago for my church's contemporary band, and the benefits to me—spiritually and musically—have been immense. Spiritually, I feel great about motivating the congregation to worship more enthusiastically. Musically, I've developed my ability to play in odd times, along with gaining astonishing speed at low volumes. (It's a lot harder than you might think to play allegro at pianissimo.) I've also incorporated a lot more percussion and hand drumming into my playing, using sleigh bells during Christmas, bongos for world-music songs, and a tambourine for Celtic tunes. I use brushes and cymbal mallets much more than sticks, and my cymbal work dominates over bass drum work.

All of this has been a fantastic learning experience for me. I highly recommend church drumming to any drummer wishing to expand his or her horizons into new musical challenges. The spiritual benefits are the icing on the cake.

Dennis
via Internet

Mr. Hendrickson's article was very inspiring to me. I started playing the drums a little over two years ago, when I got to the US. I go to a church where they had a drumset but no drummer. I got on the set and have been on it ever since. I loved watching my uncle play the drums back in Africa, but I never got a chance to learn. Now I believe God wants to use me to minister through the drums. I can't afford formal training at the moment, but doors are opening for me to become a better player. Thanks for the inspiration and for what I've learned from reading *Modern Drummer*.

Bolu "Bam" L. Olupona
Houston, TX

A lot of people may not realize that church drumming has evolved to the point where it has become its own specialized discipline, much like jazz, rock, or country drumming. Church drumming has its own set of nuances that one needs to master in order to be effective in that genre of music. Mr. Hendrickson's article only scratched the surface. I hope to see more articles on this subject.

Matthew Jackson
Houston, TX

As a woman who plays with a contemporary Christian group in a small church, I enjoyed your "Drumming For God" article. At 5' 2" and the age of forty-two, I thought I'd be laughed off the riser. Instead, I find it one of the most gratifying things I've done in my life. We've worked our way up to playing songs of such Christian artists as Jami Smith and Ginny Owens, and the congregation has been high in their praises.

Here's to taking up music at any age—whether you're paid or not—and to loving the art of percussion.

Kelle Thompson
via Internet

Most people forget that the arts were once focused around the church. It's very exciting to see that focus returning in many musicians today. Thanks for the insightful information and coverage of this genre of music.

Rick Gates
Springfield, MO

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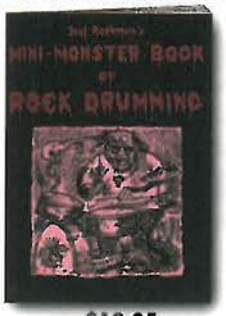

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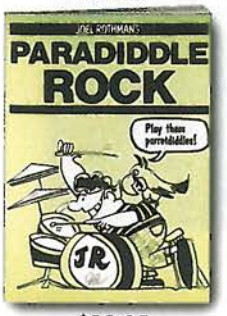

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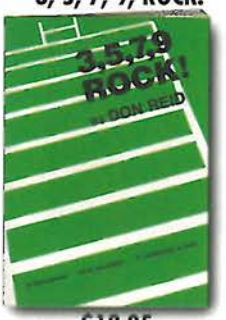

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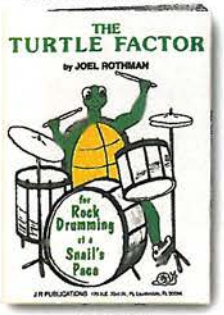

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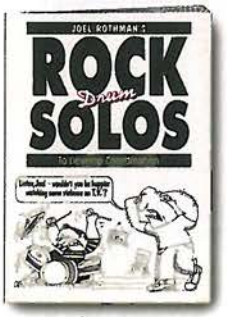

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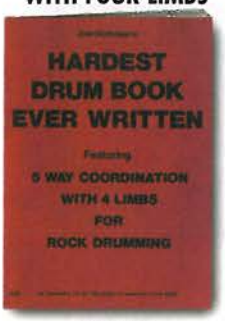

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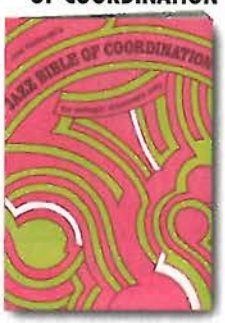

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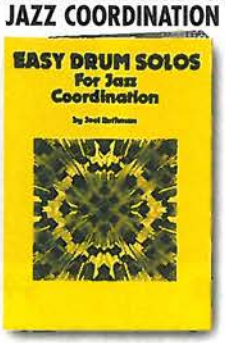

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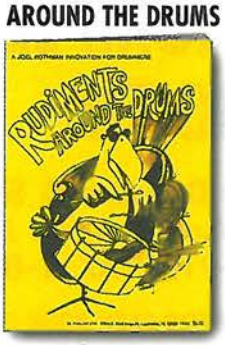

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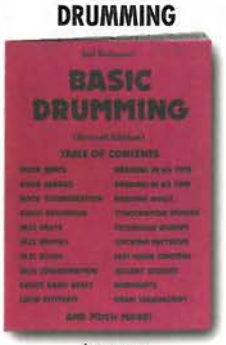
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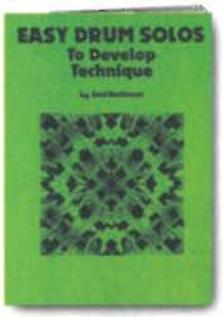

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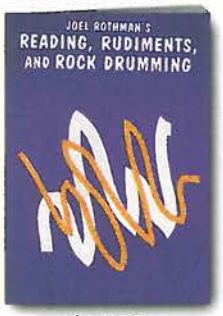

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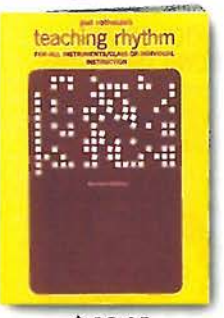

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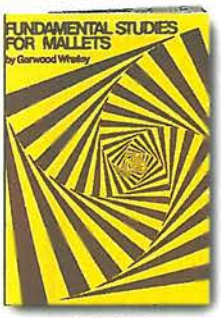

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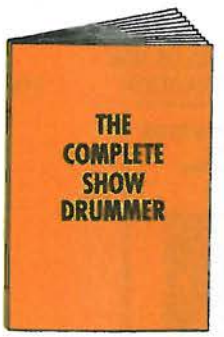

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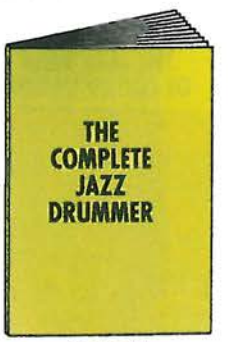

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Insurance In The Pocket

Thank you for Bruce Hicks' article addressing the very serious matter of insurance (*Taking Care Of Business*, October '03 *MD*). I began pro gigging in Los Angeles two years ago, working three nights a week—with no insurance. This year my kit, cymbals, and hardware were stolen. It was a nightmare. Thanks again for encouraging our community to take the first step and insure.

David Millard
via Internet

Kudos To Phil

I enjoyed reading the *Update* article with J.R. Conners, in which he and Taylor Hawkins both express their appreciation for Phil Collins. I find it mildly amusing when young musicians and critics suddenly "discover" Phil Collins *the drummer*.

In the late 1970s, Phil Collins was thought by many to be not only the finest rock drummer, but also possibly the finest jazz-fusion drummer in the world. Students of drumming could do worse than to pick up a copy of *Foxtrot* by Genesis or *Moroccan Roll* by Brand X, to hear some of Phil's phenomenal stick work and odd-time playing.

Collins profoundly understood the importance of the drums in the creation of the whole song. A section in 13/8, for example, was not just thrown into a song to be clever; it was inextricably woven into the mood and style of a piece. I hear many parts today—played by experienced and highly revered drummers—that are technically superb, but unfortunately lack feel and sensitivity.

Plenty of things happened before *Face Value* and "In the Air Tonight," and before Phil somehow got relegated by a cynical press to Michael Bolton status. For those of us who were lucky enough to see him play live, there were few to match him.

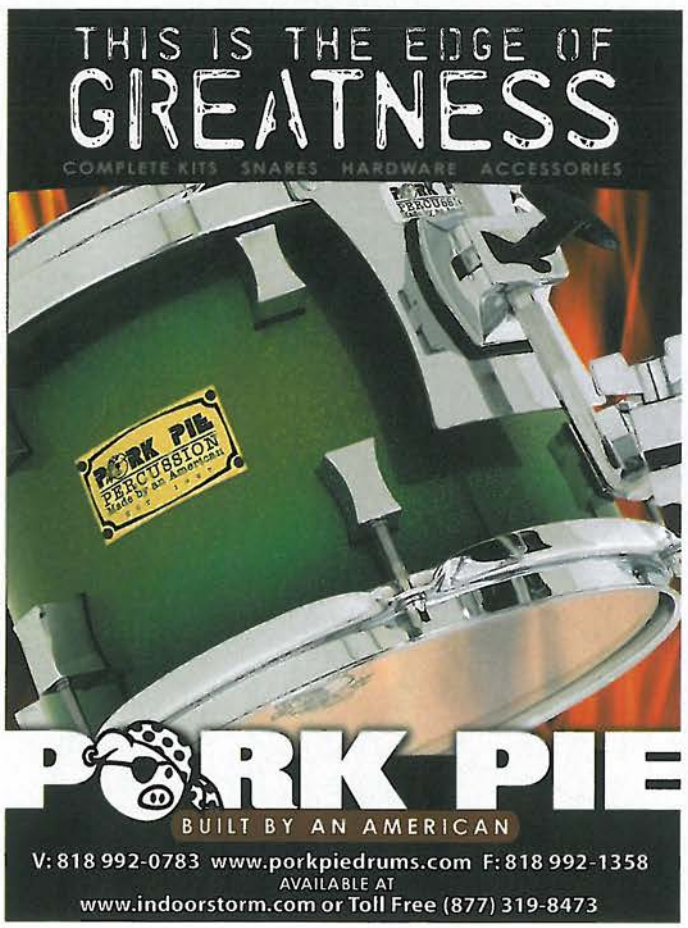
Martin Dew
San Francisco, CA

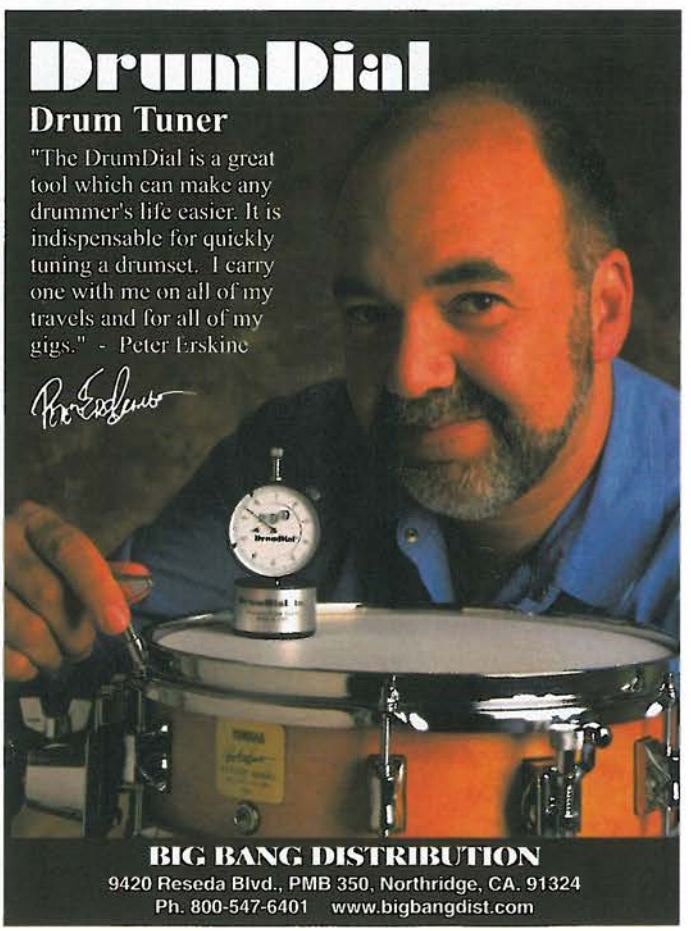
Response To Barrett

Mark Barrett's October *Readers' Platform* letter about Neil Peart's placement in the 2003 *MD* Readers Poll was puzzling. Neil has taken the top rock drummer honor in every *MD* poll practically since 1981. So Neil places at #3 now and Mark is complaining? If Neil's playing was as stellar as on the classic '80s Rush albums, the drumming community would have reacted accordingly. But it's a different time, and many other professionals are finally getting the recognition they deserve for *their* hard work.

Mark implies that there may be young, misinformed drummers filling out these polls. But those readers are the same ones who see Neil's name all over *MD*, issue after issue. For example, in the same issue in which Mark's letter appears, Charlie Benante talks about how he practiced to Rush every day on the Anthrax tour, and Cold's Sam McCandless mentions how Neil is "one of the only drummers whose solos are important." Read the August 2003 interview with Dashboard Confessional's Mike Marsh and you'll see Neil's name yet again. And in the June 2003 issue, Godsmack's drummer talks about how the band devoted a song on their last album to Neil!

Robert Telleria
Author Of *Rush: Merely Players*
via Internet





I'm a big Rush fan, and Neil Peart has unquestionably had a powerful and lasting impact on my playing. However, I did not vote for Neil as the "Best Recorded Performance" for *Vapor Trails*—because I didn't think Neil's playing was the best stuff out there right now. Apparently other *MD* readers agreed with me. Mr. Barrett: Maybe the younger drummers are better informed than you are!

Maxwell Button
Columbus, OH

Billy's Birthday Letter

Editor's note: Billy Ward received this letter on his recent birthday.

Dear Billy: I'm sure you're very busy, but I just wanted to share my story and say thank you.

After wanting to do nothing but play drums since the fourth grade (I'm twenty-nine now), I got very bitter and burned out about six years ago. So I started what became a very successful career as a live sound engineer. I got paid to see the world like I'd always wanted—just not doing what I thought I would be doing. At any rate, last summer I had a bit of an epiphany, and I rededicated myself to drumming.

Since I got back into playing and reading *Modern Drummer*, your columns have had a huge impact on me. Your wisdom and insight are a major inspiration. The best example is your "Leap Of Faith" article. Right around the time that that article came out, I was agonizing over whether to walk away from my successful sound career and audition for a musical theater contractor. Needless to say, I auditioned, and I was hired as the drummer/percussionist for the North American tour of *Cats*. I've been able to spend the entire summer doing nothing but practicing all day and gigging with several bands in different genres at night. I've signed endorsement deals with Aquarian and Vater, and I'm going to be spending the next ten months getting paid to see the world (okay, just North America)—this time *playing drums*.

Thank you for sharing your wisdom, insight, and concepts with the rest of the drumming community. It is truly appreciated.

Dave Harris
Glens Falls, NY

How To Reach Us

Correspondence to *MD*'s *Readers' Platform* may be sent by mail: 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, fax: (973) 239-7139, or email: rvh@moderndrummer.com.

OOPS!

The photo of Derico Watson that appeared on pages 4 and 146 of the November *MD* was incorrectly credited. The photo was taken by Colin Schofield, and provided courtesy of Premier Drums.

The Web site for Silver Fox Drumsticks shown in the *Product Close-Up* review on page 40 is incorrect. The correct Web address is www.silverfoxpercussion.com.

The email address for Kansas City Drum Co. on page 88 is incorrect. The correct email address is goodtubs@yahoo.com.

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Slingerland In Shelbyville?

Q I recently purchased a Slingerland drum from a local music shop. At first look I believed it to carry a Niles (Illinois) badge. However, upon getting it home, I realized that the badge in fact read "Assembled in Shelbyville TN." The date stamped inside is Jan. 17, 1966. The shell appears to be maple, but the reinforcing hoops are oak. The serial number is 19852. I have a matching kit in champagne sparkle with 1966 dates, Niles badges, and much higher serial numbers, hence my confusion. Were there two companies at that time? Any light you could shed on my confusion would be greatly appreciated.

drumsbanger
via Internet

A According to *MD* drum historian Harry Cangany, "The main Slingerland factory moved from Chicago to Niles, Illinois about 1960, and remained there until it closed about 1985. Slingerland used the facility in Shelbyville, Tennessee during the mid-1960s Beatles boom to make sticks, heads, and some shells. It was shut down after a year or two. Badges on Shelbyville drums are red instead of black. For additional information, see Rob Cook's excellent *The Slingerland Book* (www.rebeats.com)."

Pocket Drummers

Q In bios about various drummers, I keep coming across the term "pocket drummer." What does this mean?

Stephanie Ellison
via Internet

A The term describes the type of drummer who plays with great feel and who establishes a solid groove that the rest of the band can build on. This is usually in contrast to a drummer who plays a lot of notes and busy patterns.

R&B drummers are especially noted for their "pocket," as are some studio drummers. Classic examples would be Al Jackson Jr. (with Booker T & The MG's and dozens of Stax/Volt records), Bernard Purdie, Rick Marotta, Steve Gadd, Shawn Pelton, "JR" Robinson, and Jeff Porcaro.

Rock drummers can also be "pocket" players, depending on the nature of the music being played. Prog rock and speed-metal players might not fit the description, but groove-rock players like Kenny Aronoff and Phil Rudd (AC/DC) would certainly qualify.

Polishing A Black Beauty

Q I'm about to rebuild a Ludwig Black Beauty snare. Do you have any suggestions about polishing the shell? Also, what types of heads sound best on this drum? I like a fat, high-pitched sound.

skater 543000
via Internet

A We forwarded your question to John Aldridge, who is an authority on the care, maintenance, and restoration of Black Beauty drums. He replies, "I'm assuming that you're talking about an un-engraved, newer Black Beauty, since you didn't mention any engraving on your drum. Cleaning such a shell can be accomplished easily with some warm water and dishwashing soap.

"Remove all the hardware, then set the shell in a sink large enough to catch water as you run it over the shell. The water should only be as warm as you can comfortably work with. Some of the early 1990s BB's had water-based clear coats that will rinse off if the water is too hot.

Ludwig Black Beauty Snare, circa 1990

"Squirt a small amount of dishwashing liquid onto the shell, get your hands wet, and work your way around the shell, working the soap into a lather by rubbing lightly with your fingertips. Patience is required for stubborn dirt, but there really shouldn't be much since the shell doesn't provide a lot of gripping surface for dirt. Once you've worked your way around the exterior surface, rotate the shell under the running water (handling it from the inside with your fingertips) to rinse off the soap. You may need to rub a little more if any dirt has survived the first round.

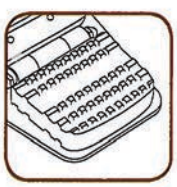
"After all the soap is rinsed off, dry the shell by running a wadded-up handful of paper towels over the inside and outside. Keep contact with the outside finish to a minimum. You should only have to go around the outside of the shell once lightly with the paper towels to remove the remaining water.

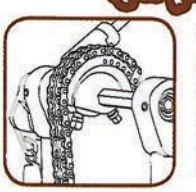
"Any low-abrasive polish will serve to clean the hardware. I recommend Flitz or Wenol, two polishes that come in tubes. Gather a pile of soft cotton cloths. Use one cloth with a *tiny* amount of polish on it at a time. Wipe the polish on a small area of each part and work it into the crevices with your fingernails under the cloth. Let the polish sit for a minute or so, then use a *clean* cloth to remove the polish and buff the surface. The chrome should shine up like new.

"In terms of head choices, I tend to go with heads that allow me to get as many sounds as possible. For a post-1990 Black Beauty, that tends to be a coated Remo Ambassador batter, with an Ambassador snare-side head. Crank the top head up to get the pitch you want. I recommend cranking the bottom head up *really* tight. As for a "fat" sound, that's not something that usually goes with higher tunings. However, there is a simple (if slightly expensive) way to add it back in. Puresound Percussion's P-1416 snare wires will give you a snappy sound with a great deal of bottom. Add in the historic sound of the Black Beauty, and you've got a recipe for a great-sounding drum."

ABE LABORIEL, JR.

PAUL McCARTNEY





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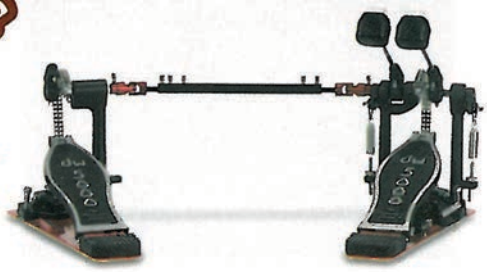

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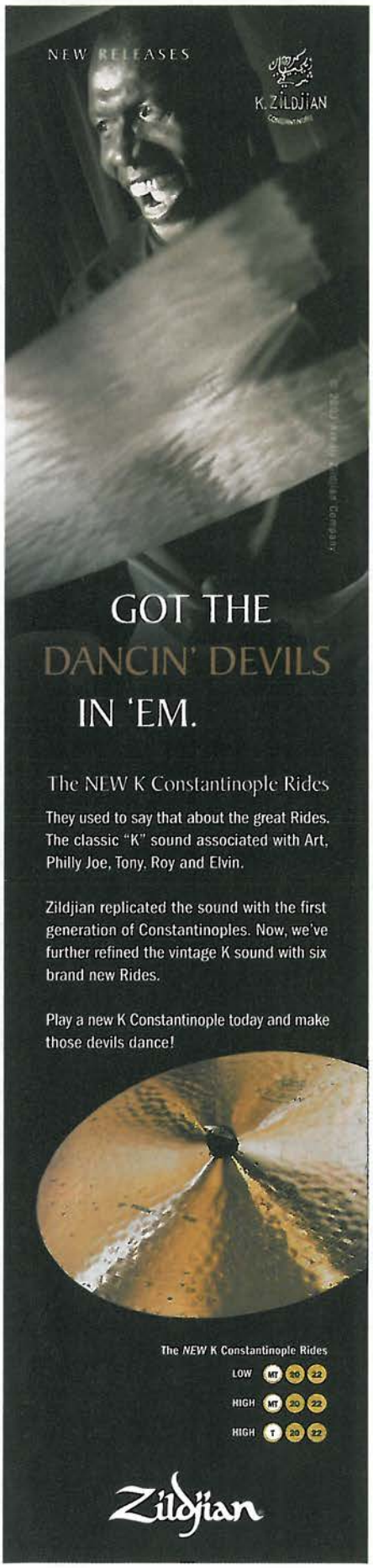


Re-Cutting Bearing Edges

Q I recently purchased a Sonor Hilite kit from the early '90s. I'm pleased with the kit, but I did notice small dips on some of the bearing edges. I've heard that having the bearing edges on older kits re-cut can improve resonance and tuning. How does one go about this? Is it safe? If I wanted to have the bearing edges cut to match the manufacturer's original specs, how would I locate this information? Lastly, where does one take one's drums to be re-cut?

alienegypt
via Internet

A Having bearing edges re-cut is a common practice when those edges are damaged. It's not a difficult process, but it does require the proper skill and equipment, and should be done by a qualified drum repair technician. You can locate such a technician in your area by calling music stores and drumshops. Failing that, several drum customizers/restorers advertise in the pages of *Modern Drummer*. Most of those have Web sites to which you can go for further information.

Unless an edge is terribly damaged around the entire circumference of the drum, it is a simple matter for the technician to determine the original "factory installed" angle for the edge, assuming that is what you wish to duplicate. However, you may also wish to discuss the possibilities of using different angles to obtain a specific sound that you desire. Generally, sharper edges give a drum more attack and sustain, while less acute angles (or even rounded edges) can produce more warmth and a mellower tone.

Drum Demos

Q I'm a drummer in Texas who's currently searching for session or live work. Everyone I talk to says they want to hear a demo of me. What does a drum demo usually consist of?

Brooks Quillian
via Internet

A Not everyone wants to hear the same thing on a demo, but there are some generally accepted norms.

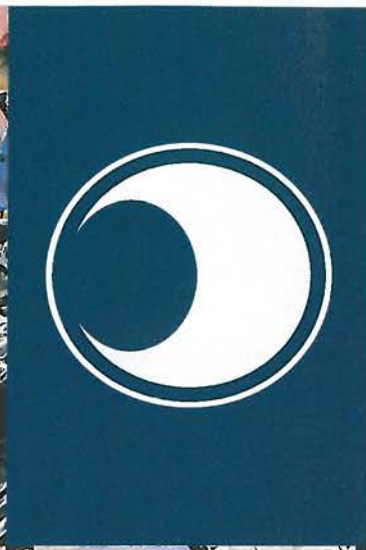
1. A demo of drums alone doesn't indicate how you sound in a musical context, which is what potential employers want to hear. It's much better to play with a band, or at least with some sort of recorded material (minus drums).
2. Demonstrate as many different playing styles as you are *truly* capable of. (Don't reach for things on a demo; just show your strengths.)
3. Keep the examples short. Fade-ins and fade-outs of eight to sixteen bars of each tune should be sufficient. Try to keep the whole thing under three minutes.
4. Unless specifically requested, drum solos should not be included on a demo.
5. Accompany the demo with a professional-looking package including a résumé, a very brief personal bio, and a high-quality recent photo.

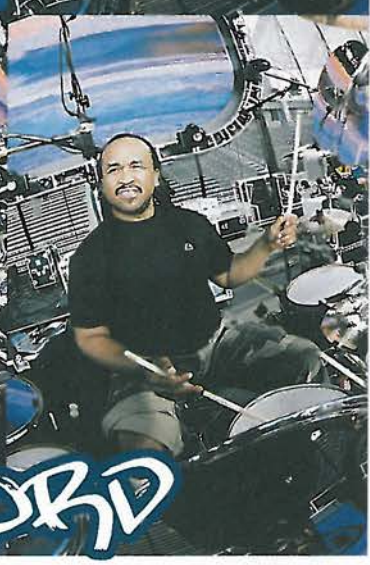
Videos To DVD

Q I've noticed a number of DVD releases of well-known VHS drum videos lately. I was wondering if DCI Video had any plans to re-release the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concerts that my drummer friends and I have enjoyed for years. The 1989 concert features Louie Bellson, Gregg Bissonette, Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Gadd, and Dave Weckl; the 1991 concert features Neil Peart, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Steve Smith, Omar Hakim, and Will Calhoun. There are some great moments in these concerts, and I would thoroughly enjoy a DVD release. Do you have any information about projected plans?

Joe Choroszewski
Hillsborough, NJ

A Videos originally released on the DCI label are now handled by Warner Bros. According to Warners' Ray Brych, "The *1989 Memorial Concert* is going into the production pipeline shortly. The *Making Of Burning For Buddy* videos will follow. Most of the classic videos from DCI will be converted to DVD. It's a slow, expensive process, but we're filtering them through as production allows."





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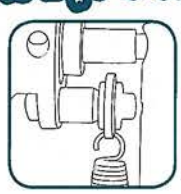

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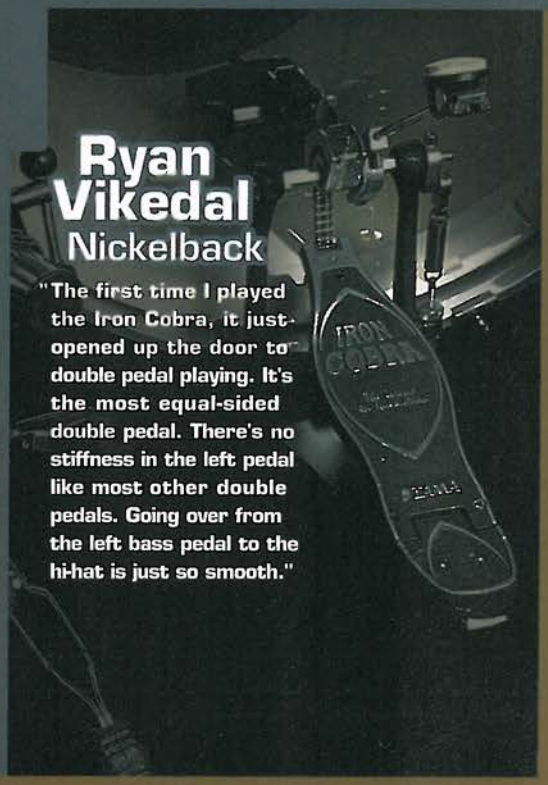
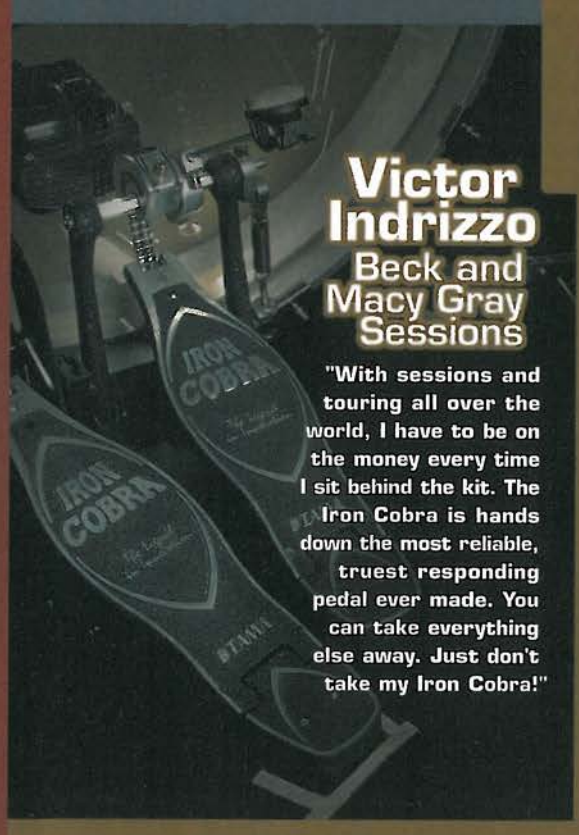


Ryan Vikedal
Nickelback

"The first time I played the Iron Cobra, it just opened up the door to double pedal playing. It's the most equal-sided double pedal. There's no stiffness in the left pedal like most other double pedals. Going over from the left bass pedal to the hi-hat is just so smooth."



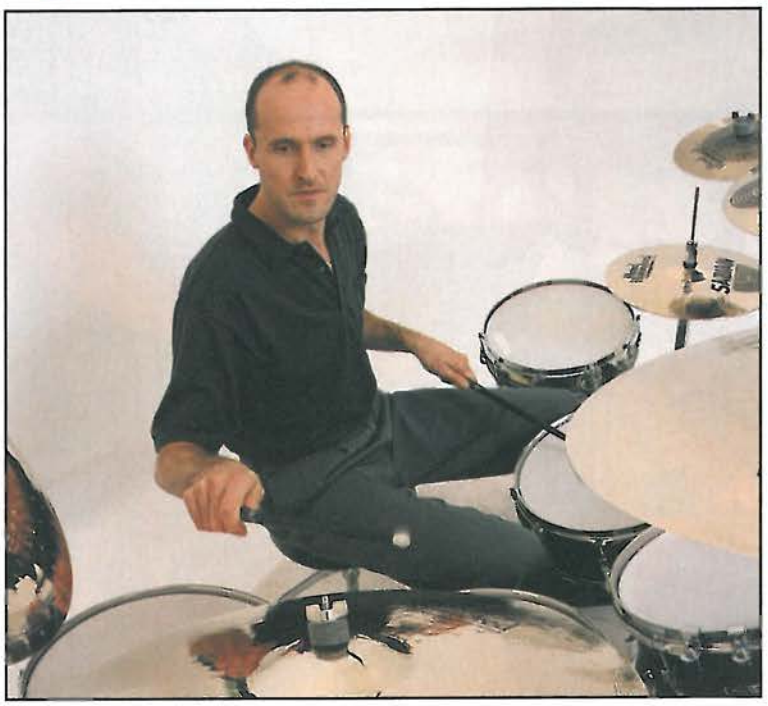
Victor Indrizzo
Beck and Macy Gray Sessions

"With sessions and touring all over the world, I have to be on the money every time I sit behind the kit. The Iron Cobra is hands down the most reliable, truest responding pedal ever made. You can take everything else away. Just don't take my Iron Cobra!"

Charlie Morgan's Tape Trick

Q On your snare drum you appear to use a clear batter, but with lots of tape on the underside. What is that all about?

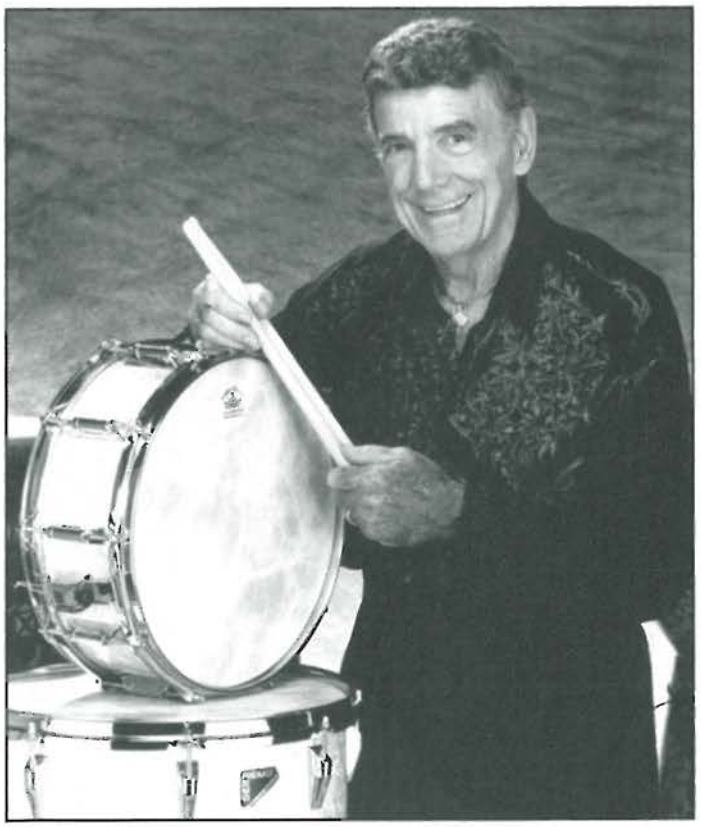
Brett Biggs
From England, via Internet



A Okay, the game is up! I've always been a fan of the CS heads that Remo makes, but I wanted to go one stage further.

The concept is very simple: The more weight you have in the *middle* of the head, the lower the tone relative to the tension. Since I'm a rock drummer, I like a bit of "beef" in my snare, without losing too much of the stick bounce off the head. So I take the head off, turn it over, and place several strips of gaffer's tape on the underside. Each strip is about 4" long, placed as centrally as possible. The second one is placed at right angles to the first, and the third and fourth ones fill in the gaps—making a sort of "asterisk" pattern. The result is a patch that has a variable thickness—four plies in the center, working out to single plies at the edges. It's the variable-ply factor that makes the difference between this and a standard CS head.

Technique Tips From Louie Bellson



Q First, I'd like to thank you for all the years that you've graced the drumming community with your unique style. I attended a clinic you gave at the University of North Texas very early on in my drumming development. Since then, it seems to me that in the ensuing years you've only gotten *faster* in your rudimental development. This has been a driving motivator for me as far as age is concerned. I'm under the impression that as certain drummers get older, their rudimental speed improves. Would you agree with this statement?

Second, I'd like to ask you for any warm-up exercises you could recommend to help me develop fluidity, left-hand speed and control, and muscle relaxation while playing.

Steven Scheberle
via Internet

A Thank you for your questions. Your impression that certain drummers develop more speed as they grow older is true. If these drummers are in good health and play constantly, the years of experience enables them to have more speed, relaxation, and control.

To improve fluidity and muscle relaxation, set the metronome at quarter note = 90. With the left hand alone, play quarter beats, 8th beats, triplets, and 16th beats. Gradually set the metronome a little faster. Repeat this pattern using the right hand alone. Finally, use both hands. You should find these exercises helpful.

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Garbage's Butch Vig On Processing Drum Sounds

Q I'm a big fan of your work as a drummer and a producer. I especially appreciate the way you incorporate technology with great drumming to create a distinctive sound.

A lot of people combine acoustic drums and triggers. But I haven't seen anyone processing a miked-up acoustic drum, using its natural sound as a starting point. As an example, I'd like to be able to add a phase effect to just the snare drum on a particular verse, then manually turn it off for the rest of the song.

My question is, besides your own mic' setup with your own mixer, what would you suggest—signal processing-wise—to get started?

Michael Horick
Milwaukee, WI

A Thank you for the kind words. The first thing you have to consider is how you are going to turn the effects on and off while you're playing the drums. It's easy to turn on a preset and have various drums routed through the processor before the song starts. But it's more difficult once you start playing.

You can use pads to send MIDI signals to the processor, or you can use a foot switch. But I never liked using them, because I found them distracting from the actual performance. Also, sometimes the patch changes lag behind the downbeat. That's one of the reasons I use a ddrum sampler and put a lot of the effects on individual pads while we're rehearsing for a tour. That way, when we perform, I'm still playing the part in real time, but the effect was taken from a live drum in the studio and processed ahead of time into the ddrum.

If you have a great sound tech, then a lot of the effects can be controlled in real time from the front of house, which is very cool. Ya just gotta trust your FOH mixer and hope his or her hands aren't so full with vocals, guitars, bass, and keyboards that he or she misses the drum effects!

As far as processing gear goes, Eventide makes great signal processors, but anything will work if you dig what it's doing to the drum. Sometimes, the cheaper the better. I still like using the old Yamaha SPX 90, because it seems to speak well through a PA. I hope this helps, and good luck!

Repeat Bar A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"We're human. So don't try to take the human factor out of it. Sure, musicians and drummers may vary the tempo a little. But if you're locked in with the rest of the rhythm section, who's going to know? Tell us where you want the time, and we'll play it there. We may vary the tempo, but it's going to feel good."

Funk legend **John "Jabo" Starks**, September 1999

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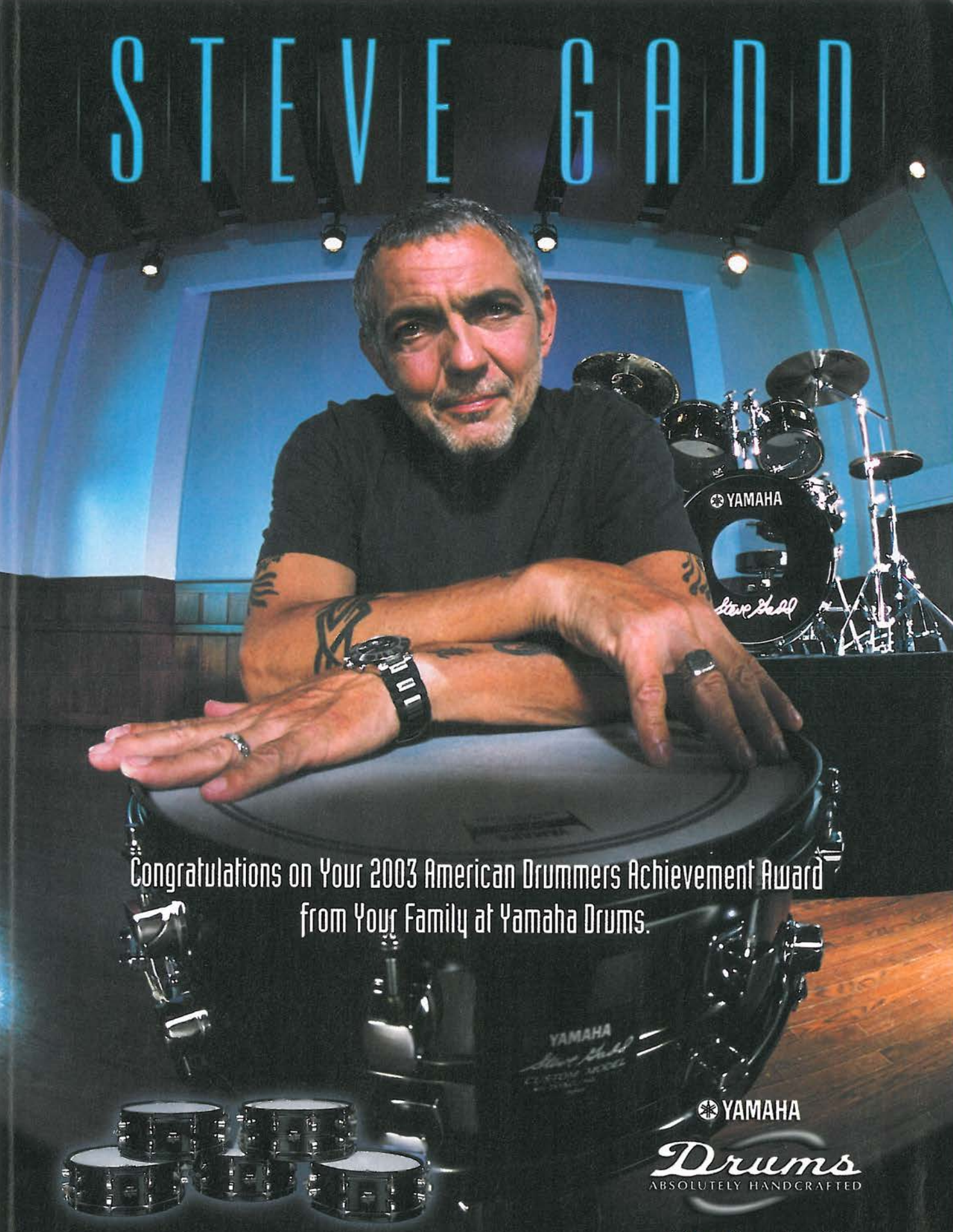
STEVE GADD



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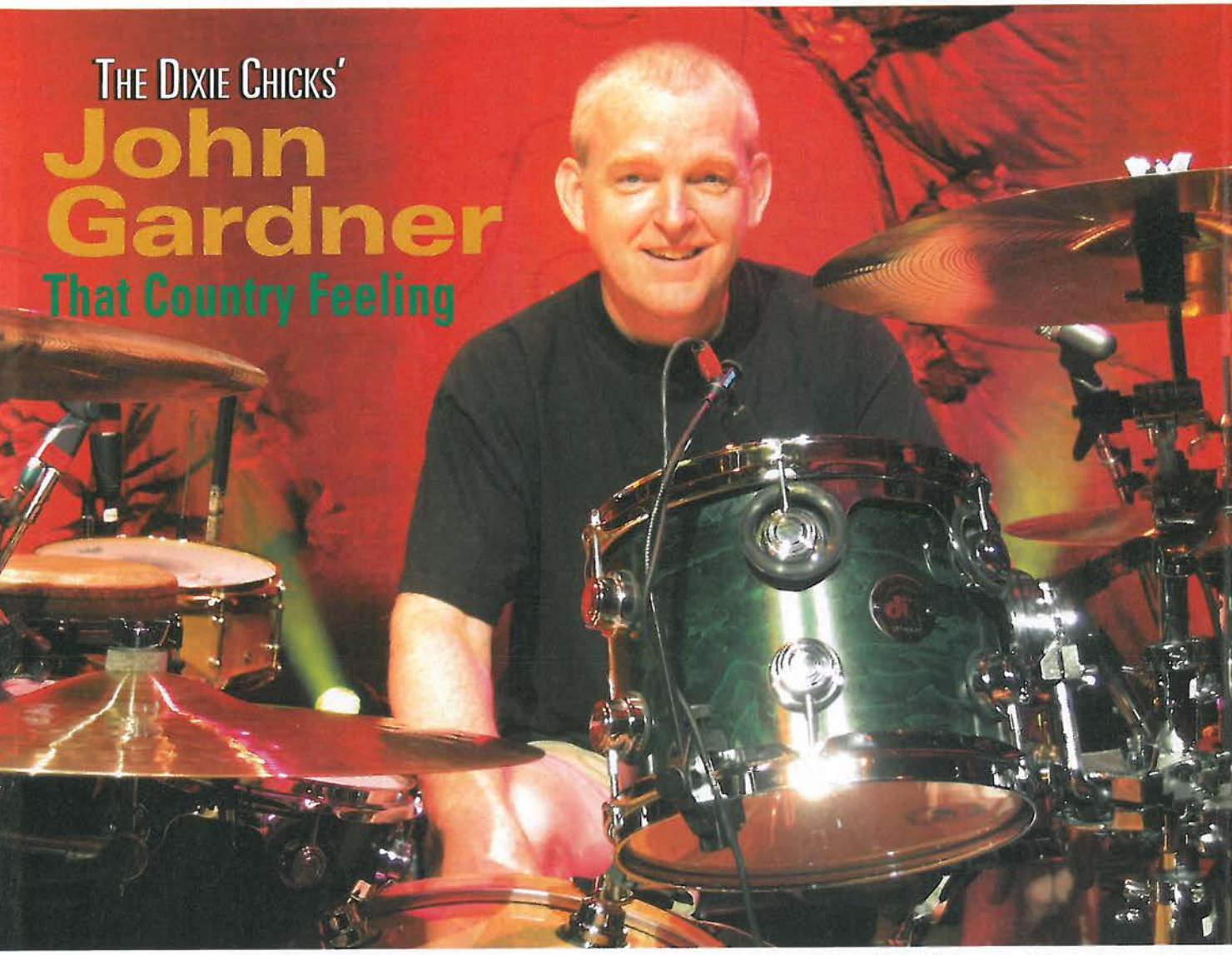


The Dixie Chicks' John Gardner

That Country Feeling

Thanks to the urging of Dixie Chicks multi-instrumentalist John Mock, a little over a year ago drummer/percussionist John Gardner took a leave of absence from his gig as staff drummer at the Grand Ole Opry. Why? To play percussion with The Chicks for a couple of nights at LA's Kodak Theatre. (Those performances are documented on the DVD *Live From The Kodak Theatre*.) But Gardner ended up staying on drums and percussion for the entire tour.

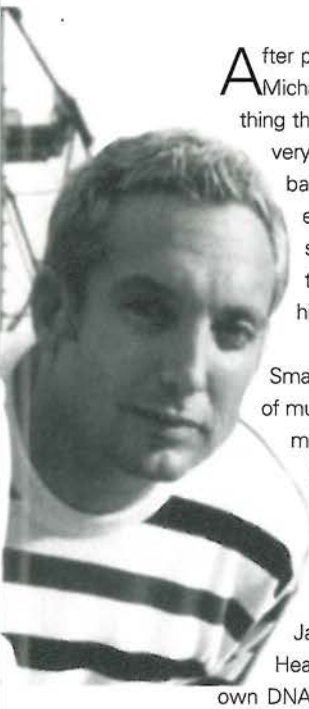
"Making them feel comfortable on stage is really what's needed from me," Gardner says. "The Chicks also need me to duplicate the parts from their records. There are some extra things we put in for excitement, though. They also need to be able to trust me to be consistent every night. This is a pretty wild show. We play on a bizarre, circular stage. There are hydraulics that move the drum riser up and down. There's a lot of movement on stage and it's a huge production, so I have to really focus on the music."

Gardner has had to alter his normal setup to fit the constraints of The Chicks' unique stage. Normally he likes to play his cymbals and toms fairly high, but this stage doesn't allow him to have anything over 42" high, which is pretty confining. "I've busted my knuckles and cut my hands on cymbals," he says, "because they're not set up where I'm used to them being."

Adding to the gig's responsibility, Gardner says that he plays along to a drum machine on every tune. "We use a drum machine playing a shaker pattern," he explains, "because the sound can be so big and loud in auditoriums. It helps hold everything together."

Gardner plays about two-thirds of The Dixie Chicks' set of twenty-two songs on drums. He plays percussion—shaker and djembe—on four or five others. Needless to say, it's a very challenging gig physically. "I do a lot of jogging and try to eat right," he says, "because this *is* a demanding show. I'm kind of the old man of the band, so I have to work hard to keep up with all these youngsters."

Robyn Flans



Michael Urbano

Smashmouth's Monster Man

After playing in a number of bands and doing many sessions, Michael Urbano has found a home with Smashmouth. "The thing that I like most about this band is that as a drummer it's very challenging," Urbano says of his decision to join the band. "For a pop group, they're pretty eclectic. One song will be a punk-rock song, the next will be a bossa nova, the next a '60s thing, and the next a hip-hop song. It never gets boring."

Urbano gets his head around Smashmouth's variety thanks to his love of music. "I've been a pop music junkie all my life," he says. "It's the one thing I'm kind of an expert on. So when somebody comes at me with a song that they have and it's in a certain style, I just pretend like I'm one of my heroes."

To that end, Urbano will go from Keith Moon to James "Diamond" Williams [Ohio Players] to Topper Headon [The Clash], depending on the song. "Then your own DNA gets mixed up in there and it kind of morphs," the drummer says. "Rock 'n' roll is a constant mutation. We all borrow from one another, and it slowly changes."

Since the '80s, Urbano has been experimenting with drum machines and samplers to augment his kit. He continues that approach on Smashmouth's latest, *Get The Picture*, especially during the songs "Always Gets Her Way," "Whole Lotta Love," and "Hot." "The trick to playing with loops," he explains, "is to tune the drums to the track. If you have a lot of low end in the loop, you can't have a bass drum with a lot of low end."

Playing to a click, working with loops, and utilizing Pro Tools is exciting for Urbano. "I like the click track and have worked hard to make it my friend," he says. "As for playing with loops, that's exciting for me. When you're playing in a band, you need to be listening to everybody and interacting with the players. If there's a loop going, you're just interacting with that as well. So it's like having another drummer or percussionist in the band."

David John Farinella

MxPx's Yuri Ruley

Drumming Before And After

MxPx drummer Yuri Ruley almost ended up being a bass player. "When I was younger I thought the bass looked so cool," he admits. "But that kind of fell through when I checked out the drums. I started banging on buckets in the garage and making little percussion instruments. It all grew from there." Eventually Tom Wisniewski, Ruley's future bandmate in MxPx and a former drummer, told him to stop playing buckets and get a proper drumset.

Shortly after picking up his first kit, Ruley met bassist and singer Mike Herrera, and the MxPx seeds were sown. While the young drummer was learning by playing a ton and taking lessons, MxPx (then know as Magnified Plaid) got out and started gigging throughout their home state of Washington. Their debut, *Pokinatcha*, was released in 1995 while they were seniors in high school.

In the eight years since, Ruley and the band have evolved from sloppy punksters to refined songwriters. That's not to say, though, that Ruley is an undisciplined player. "We always try to make our songs a little more complicated and the parts a little more interesting," he says. "I just try to make it as weird and as cool as I can."

The band's latest offering, *Before Everything And After*, pushes the trio into new sonic territories. And Ruley adds some nifty touches on the drumkit. Take the tune "Well Adjusted." According to Yuri, "It has a funny little triplet thing that sounds cool. People hear it and they get excited right away. It has an energy to it."

Then there's the ballad, "Quit Your Life." "That tune was a challenge to play because it's so slow," Ruley admits. "But I enjoyed it because it stretched me. The more I'm challenged, the better it is for me. It's all about getting better at what you do."

David John Farinella

Michael McDonald's Yvette Preyer

Playing From The Heart

Yvette Preyer has been blowing away Michael McDonald audiences for the past five years, ever since she crossed paths with the famed singer/songwriter in Memphis, where Preyer resides. McDonald was doing a gig there for the National Civil Rights Museum and was using a local band. Preyer, who had been playing with Isaac Hayes at the time, got the call for the gig, and by the end of rehearsal McDonald asked her to join his band.

"The important thing for Michael's music is feel," Preyer says. "A *lot* of feel, a lot of pocket. He's very soulful. It comes from his heart, so he needs a drummer who also plays from the heart."

Preyer says one of her favorite tunes to play with McDonald is "Yah Mo B There." She adds that she also loves playing the ballads with him. "Actually, I like playing *everything* with Michael," she laughs. "It's just incredible. It all feels so good."

Preyer also sings background (and an occasional lead) with McDonald. Her tip for singing and drumming at the same time? "Don't think about it. Just do it. When you concentrate on one thing, sometimes you lose something else. But I've found the easiest solution is to not think about it."

Yvette says that McDonald works about six months out of the year. When she's not out with him, she's mostly back in Memphis working in a variety of situations, including her five-piece instrumental jazz band, Monday's Child. "That band has some great players," she says. "We do contemporary jazz and some traditional, straight-ahead stuff. But we're also pretty creative," she laughs. "We can get out there at times."

Robyn Flans

Eve 6's Tony Fagenson

It's All In His Head

Ask Tony Fagenson to define his role as drummer of the trio called Eve 6—which includes vocalist/bassist Max Collins and guitarist Jon Siebels—and he'll give you a response straight out of *American Bandstand*: "The beat, man." The gospel according to Fagenson states, "A good band should be able to feel the groove without the drummer. But the drummer, especially live, sets the tone and leads the charge of the music. If the drummer speeds up, so does the whole band. To me, traditionally, the drummer is the one who everyone follows. That's the rhythm, and it's what all humans feel—in our heartbeats, how we breathe, and the way we walk."

The Eve 6 story could easily be titled "Boys To Men." Barely out of high school when they signed their deal with RCA, they saw their self-titled 1998 debut quickly shoot to platinum. Their 2000 follow-up, *Horrorscope*, made it to gold. After two years on the road, they took their time recording *It's All In Your Head*, which took them straight to radio, impressive chart positions, and steady sales since its July release. Eve 6 completed a string of sold-out club dates prior to a fall tour with Good Charlotte.

The men and their music have matured, as has Fagenson's approach to his instrument. For the past four years he's been faithful to his Peavey Radial 1000 kit. "The drums are a vehicle for me to work on music," he says. "I don't want too many bells and whistles. In the studio I may use some rental equipment. But onstage, I use the same Peavey kit every time.

"I'm not a 'drummer's drummer' in any way," Tony admits. "I *was* when I was in high school. But now my interests lie in music, production, and lyrics. That's what gets me off more than playing kick-ass fills. I'm not trying to rewrite the book on drumming; I'm trying to write good songs that people feel."

Elaine Hall

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Gene Krupa was born on January 15, 1909.

Cozy Cole passed away on January 29, 1981.

On January 19, 1976, Peter Frampton's recording *Frampton Comes Alive* is released (with **John Siomos** on drums). The two-record set goes on to become the biggest-selling live record of all time.

On January 13, 1973, Eric Clapton plays his famous comeback concert at the Rainbow Theatre in London with **Jim Capaldi** and **Jim Karstein** on drums. The resulting album, *Eric Clapton's Rainbow Concert*, was recently expanded from 27 to 74 minutes by Polydor.

Happy Birthday!

Max Roach (jazz legend): January 10, 1924

Jimmy Cobb (Miles Davis): January 20, 1929

Ed Shaughnessy (*The Tonight Show*): January 29, 1929

Grady Tate (soul/jazz great): January 14, 1932

Nick Mason (Pink Floyd): January 27, 1945

Aynsley Dunbar (rock giant): January 10, 1946

Corky Laing (Mountain): January 28, 1948

Eddie Bayers (Nashville studio): January 28, 1949

Phil Collins (Genesis): January 31, 1951

Paul Wertico (Pat Metheny): January 5, 1953

Dave Weckl (solo artist): January 8, 1960

Steven Adler (Guns N' Roses): January 22, 1965

Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters): January 14, 1969

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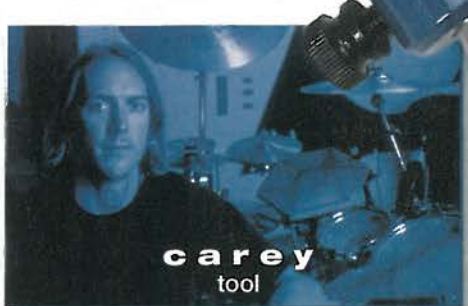

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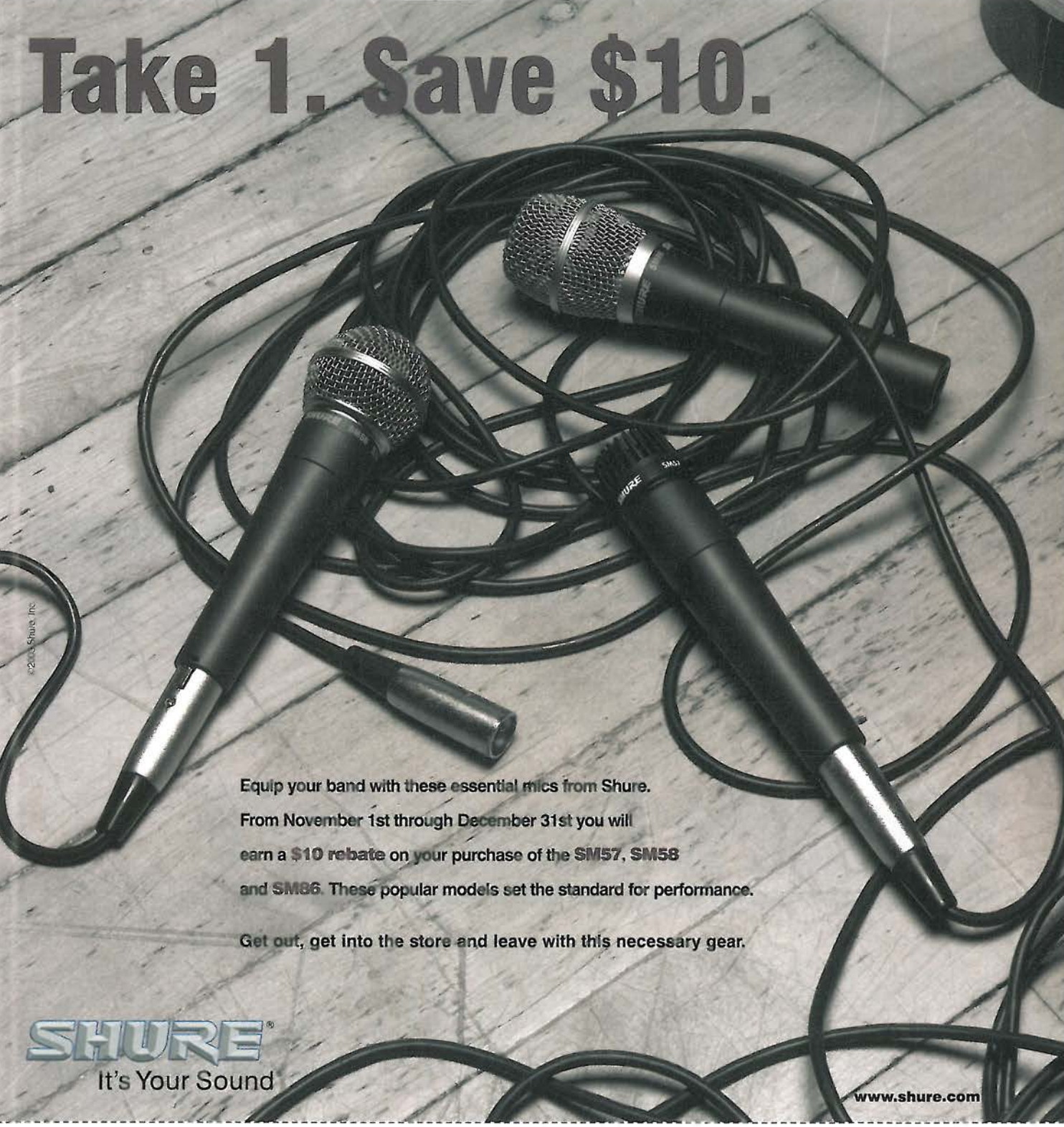

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NEWS

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Dennis Chambers is on fusion supergroup CAB's latest release, *CAB 4.*

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds drummer **James Sclavunos** is leading a new band, The Vanity Set. On their CD, *Little Stabs Of Happines*, Sclavunos sings while drum duties are handled by **David Berger.**

Mike Musburger (Posies, Fastbacks) and **Rachel Trachtenburg** are on Trachtenburg Family Slideshow Players' *Vintage Slide Collections From Seattle, Vol. 1.*

Roger Earl is on the new double-disc live collection from Foghat, *Decades Live.*

Jerome Deupree (along with his ex-Morphine mate Dana Colley) is on *Black Feather Wings* by Bourbon Princess.

Stephen Belans is on Kacy Crowley's latest, *Moodswing.*

Aaron Comess (Spin Doctors) is on Pat Daugherty's *New York Electric Piano.*

Matt Focht of Bright Eyes is on the new album by Head Of Femur, *Ringodom Of Proctor.*

The late **Freddie Waits** is on drums and **Jose Mangual, Victor Pantoja, John "Dandy" Rodriguez**, and **Osvaldo Martinez** are on percussion on **Willie Bobo**'s *Finest Hour.*

Brian Tichy has been touring with Billy Idol. He's also recording a new CD with Idol. (Check out www.briantichy.com.)

Forrest Robinson is on the new India.Arie DVD, *Live In Brazil.*

Patrick Hallahan is on *It Still Moves*, the latest by Louisville's critically acclaimed band My Morning Jacket.

Al Foster, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and **Carl Allen** are on the re-release of Donald Byrd's *Landmarks.*

If you're a fan of George Harrison's music, check out the Koch Records release *Songs From The Material World, A Tribute To George Harrison.* The CD features different artists covering George's material. Drummers on the project include **Dennis Diken, Prairie Prince, Nicky Lucero, Graham Bond**, and **Steve Luongo**.

Jimmy Keegan has been playing drums in Spock's Beard (while **Nick D'Virgilio** has undertaken the job of fronting the band). Keegan is also in rehearsals with a new Miles Copeland project called Oppera.

Victor Indrizzo, Matt Chamberlain, Mario Calire, and **Abe Laboriel Jr.** are all on Liz Phair's recent self-titled disc.

Kirke Jan is on The Rising's debut, *Future Unknown.*

Bernie Dresel, Peter Erskine, and **Ray Brinker** are on Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band's CD, *XXL.* **Luis Conte** is on percussion.

Frankie Dunlop is on Thelonious Monk's *Criss Cross*, a re-release with three bonus tracks.

Barry Kerch is on Shinedown's debut CD, *Leave A Whisper.*

Neil Bullock is on Broadcast's *Haha Sound.*

Alvino Bennett has been working with Dave Mason.

Bobby Alt is on S.T.U.N.'s CD, *Evolution Of Energy.*

Racci Shay is on Dope's recent release, *Group Therapy.*

Joe Bergamini is subbing in the Broadway show *Movin' Out.*

Danny Frankel is on tour with k.d. lang.

Bradley Webb has been booked to play the UK and Ireland tours with John Jorgenson & Friends, as well as doing a European tour with his own Trio.

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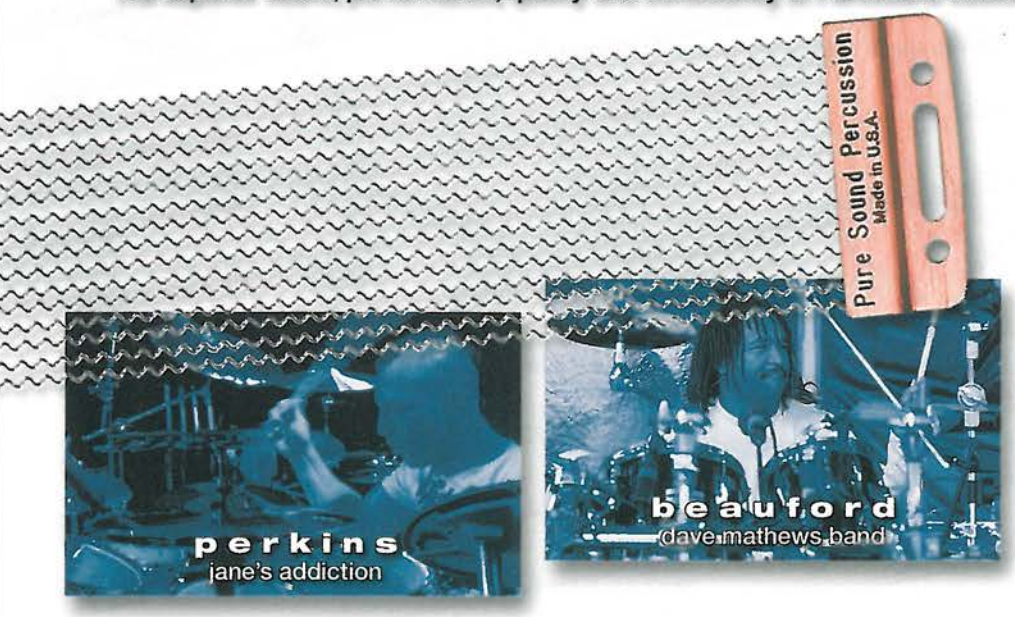

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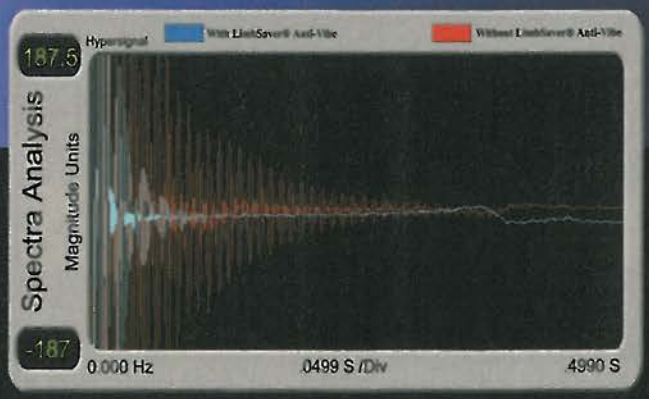

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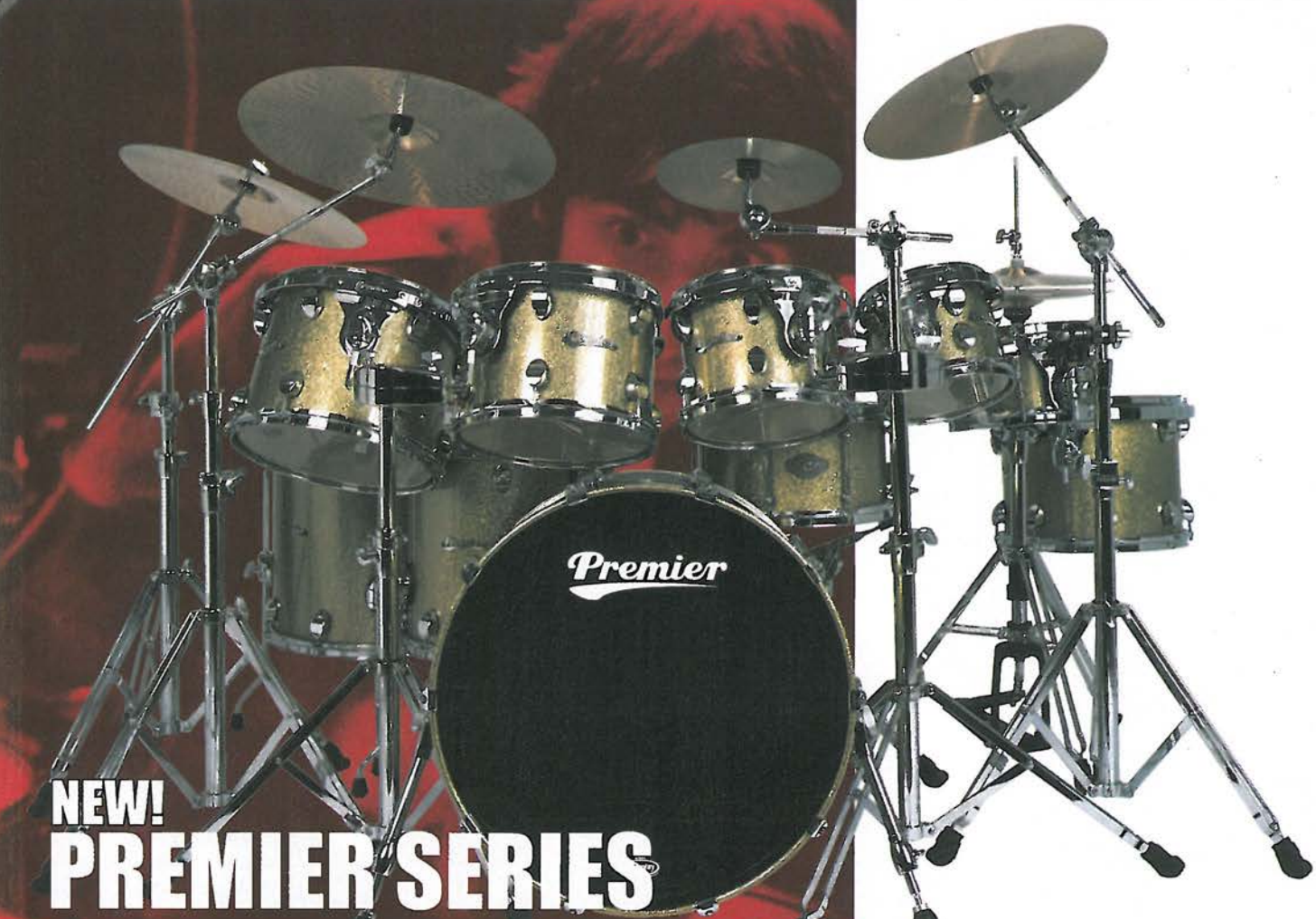

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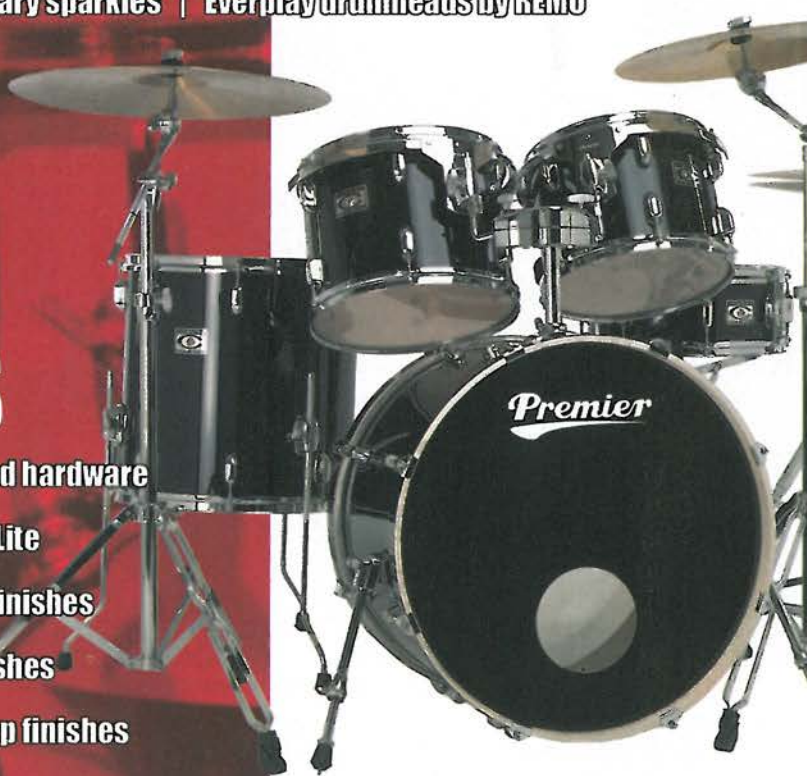

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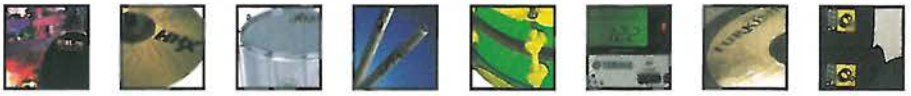

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by Chap Ostrander

Pork Pie Percussion began back in the mid-1980s, when Bill Detamore started building drums in his garage. Since then, the company has grown to a 1,000-square-foot warehouse with six employees. Pork Pie now offers drums, hardware, accessories, and custom services to the drumming community. Players can improve the sound and/or look of their existing drums, or they can custom-order the kit of their dreams.

Drum Construction

The kit sent for review included a 6x13 snare, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 suspended "floor" toms, and an 18x22 bass drum. The shells were 100% maple, with six plies for toms from 8" to 13", and seven plies for 14" to 18" toms. The snare and bass drum both had eight-ply shells. Pork Pie also offers single-ply snares in maple, red oak, and mahogany, with maple glue rings.

Bill Detamore's theory regarding bearing edges is that the outside edge of the shell and the inside curve of the drumhead should be perfectly matched. This reduces stress on the drumhead collar and makes the whole package work together. So Bill creates a round-over countercut on the outer bearing edge, using a radius

router bit to ensure perfect head seating on the shell. The inside edge is a 45° angle for snares and toms, and a 60° angle for bass drums.

The cast lugs on the drums are Bill's original design. It's a clean hourglass shape, with gaskets underneath to prevent contact with the shell. Each lug is attached to the shell with two Allen screws, which I think is a good idea, since it seems to prevent stress on the shells while tensioning the heads. I also like the Allen screws because they provide greater security with a lower potential for damage to the shell. (Have you ever slipped with a screwdriver? Scary!)

The plate for the Pork Rings mounting system has the same hourglass design as the lugs, with the air vents for the toms thoughtfully placed underneath. The butt plate for the snare strainer is also a custom design, and has nuts welded on the underside so that you are tightening against them, rather than into a threaded hole. Heavy-duty spurs and 2.3-mm hoops are standard equipment.

Hardware

The Pork Pie hardware line consists of their colorful throne, along with a snare stand and cymbal and multi-tom stands. The stands have double-braced legs, but they're still surprisingly light. They feature lots of attention to detail, such as memory locks and rubber feet angled to stay put in various configurations. Everything felt solid.

Pork Pie's throne was especially great. It had loads of cushioning and support, and the base was very stable. The snare stand featured a removable basket with a two-point mount to a ball. This made it very adjustable, easy to set up and pack, and stable. Pork Pie also offers multi-clamps to attach cymbal rods in different places.

The cymbal stands were convertible booms, and the rack toms clamped to them. The clamp-on mounts for the toms did a fine job. They kept everything off the bass shell, and their ball adjustments allowed for precise positioning of the toms. The floor stand for the two low toms included a third hole for a cymbal boom. The only things missing from the hardware package was a bass drum pedal and a hi-hat stand. That's because Bill Detamore feels that pedals and hi-hats are very personal, and that most players would prefer to select their own.

At The Finish Line

Our review kit came in a stunning lacquer finish called Everything Sparkle. It's the answer to the age-old question, "What sparkle color should I choose?" Get them all! To accomplish this, Bill incorporates equal amounts of orange, copper, pink, purple, chartreuse, and silver sparkles. He starts by spraying the raw shell with four coats of polyester sealer, followed by sanding, then two coats of silver metallic urethane. While this is still wet, the sparkles are added into clear urethane, for two more layers. After additional clear urethane and sanding, five coats of polyester topcoat are applied. Once the topcoat is dry, the drums are sanded in five different grits from coarse to fine, then buffed on three different wheels to make the completed finish smooth.

This is all done by hand, and the results are amazing. The process produces a lacquered shell that looks (and probably is) as thick as a wrap. It was absolutely flawless on our review kit. Bill pointed out to me that since he had applied the finish, he would be able to repair it should something happen.

West Side Sound

I had the opportunity to use the drums in a local production of *West Side Story* that ran for several weeks. The music is very demanding in terms of percussion. I had to play in all dynamic ranges with great clarity, and I had to count on the drums to give back what I put into them. Due to their thin shells and low-mass hardware, the drums all possessed great depth and clarity, sounding much larger than they appeared. I also got several glowing comments from the sound technicians who had to mike and balance the sound of the orchestra. They loved the sound of the kit.

I was initially concerned that a 13" snare might not be able to meet the demands of the show, but I was quickly reassured. It was among the most responsive and clear-sounding drums I've ever played. Brush work was extremely clean, and loud rimshots could be lethal.

The toms were very easy to tune, and they fell quickly into pitches that distinguished them from each other. I could also tune them into higher or lower ranges to meet the demands of different gigs. Playing between the toms was especially rewarding. Whether I played fast runs or open quarter notes, everything sounded full and clear.

The bass drum was an absolute *monster*. Supplied with a Remo PowerStroke3 batter head and an Ebony front head, the drum produced a full, rich tone with lots of punch. When I first took it out of the box at home and just hit the batter head with my hand, the windows shook. The drum had two air vents, with badges nearby on both sides.

The Pork Pie kit literally altered my perception of my playing. It allowed me to think in terms of how a phrase would sound *before* I played it. I had different expectations of what I could do, and the result was greater variation in the outcome. While I don't think that my personal kit sounds bad, it doesn't sound like this one. I was thoroughly knocked out by it.

Hands-On Quality

Bill Detamore personally signs the inside of each drum before it leaves the shop, ensuring a final quality checkout. It's also notable that Bill does *all* of the painting and bearing edges himself. All Pork Pie drums and hardware items are sold separately, since Bill believes that every kit should be created to suit the buyer's specific needs and desires.

The numbers inside our review drums were in the 10,000 range. That's a lot of drums to produce. Still, Bill definitely gave me the feeling that each drum goes out with his blessing. If you check out Pork Pie's Web site, you'll notice a lot of pig-oriented humor. Bill makes a point to keep a lighthearted attitude toward his business, saying that unless he enjoys what he does, there's no point in doing it. But when it comes to quality and originality, there's no doubt that he takes his work *very* seriously.

THE NUMBERS

Drums	
6x13 snare	$ 680
8x10 tom	$ 775
9x12 tom	$ 875
12x14	$1,045
14x16	$1,175
18x22	$1,825
Hardware	
Double tom stand	$ 190
Boom cymbal stand w/telescoping arm.	$ 165
Mini-boom	$ 70
Snare stand	$ 155
Throne (bicycle style)	$ 210
Tom clamp	$ 45

(818) 992-0783, www.porkpiedrums.com.

Sabian HHXplosion Crashes, HHX Evolution Mini Chinese, John Blackwell "Jia" Chinese, And X-Celerator Hats

Accents, Effects, And More

HITS

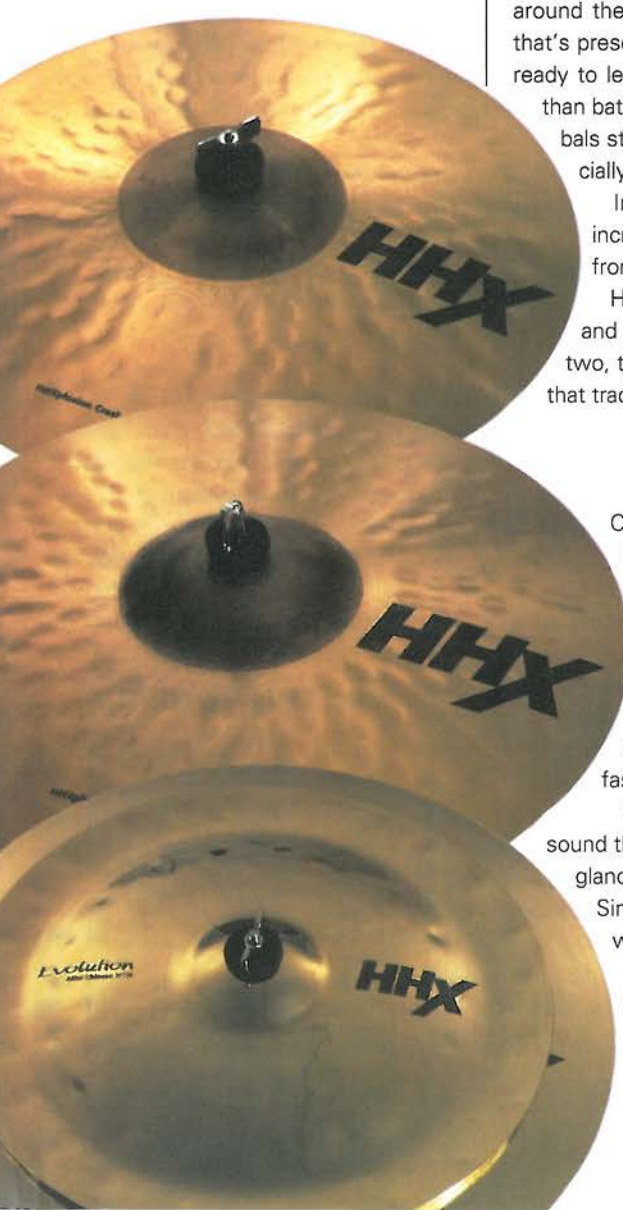
HHXplosion crashes live up to their name and offer good bells to ride on

HHX Evolution Mini Chinese is stackable for special effects

Jia Chinese offers dark, explosive sound on demand

X-Celerator Hats have excellent presence

by Kevin D. Osborne



Sabian introduced two complete new cymbal series this year, which *MD* reviewed in the July and October '03 issues. But they've also been busy adding nifty new models to existing lines. Let's take a look at some of those special goodies.

HHXplosion Crash Cymbals

When we drummers want an accent sound within the music, we want it *big* and we want it *now*. It's the job of the crash cymbal to deliver that sound without complaint. Well, the Sabian HHXplosion Crash cymbal is up to the task.

The cymbals are, as Sabian puts it, "heavily hammered for super-size surface marks." The effect of the large hammer marks is to give the cymbal a slightly "rippled" look instead of the more "dimpled" effect of smaller hammer marks. Then the cymbals are lathed with narrow grooves, which the company says gives them a "rapid, explosive response." The bell is hammered but left with a dark, unfinished look to it.

When they're hit, these cymbals produce a fast, up-front response. Striking them all around their edges, middles, and insides demonstrates the variety of pitches and tones that's present. It's almost like the sound is waiting—all bunched up and crouching down—ready to leap out when the stick strikes it. Even with a glancing blow that coaxes rather than batters, the sound is powerfully generated. While there is a beefy bottom, the cymbals still produce nice, warm overtones and a discernable ring at the upper end—especially when they're played near or on the bell.

In fact, if you don't use the bells to ride on, you'll deprive your music of some incredible sounds. The bells are large and sound very clear when hit. The vibrations from the cymbal give the bell a nice, wet tonal ring.

HHXplosion crashes are available in 16" and 18" sizes. The larger cymbal is louder and lower in pitch, with noticeably more sustain. If you have to choose between the two, the 16" provides good accent and emphasis to the music, while the 18" delivers that traditional crash power and presence. Both are great for explosive punch.

HHX Evolution Mini Chinese

The HHX Evolution Mini Chinese is a 14" extra-thin cymbal with a traditional Chinese-style upturned edge. It's designed to be played alone or stacked atop another cymbal for a trashy effect. The cymbal is heavily hammered with large hammer marks, and has narrow lathings (for fast response) and a brilliant finish. The small, raw bell has a slightly blackened "unfinished" look to it.

The Mini Chinese produces a bright sound when played on its own, with a very fast response but plenty of sustain for its size. It also has some nice musical overtones instead of just the flat, trash-can-lid sound you can get from some China cymbals. Its size lets it perform well as either a splash or a crash for fast crashes or accents.

When I piggybacked the Mini Chinese on an 18" crash cymbal, it delivered a sound that was a cross between the trash of a Chinese and the rasp of a loose sidestick glance off a hi-hat. But it had a deeper punch and more sustain and overtone ring. Since the cymbal is just 14" in diameter, you could even mount it on a 16" crash with good results. The sound will be tighter, with a quicker decay.

The HHX Evolution Mini Chinese provides a fast, explosive crash that's easily heard, but without the overpowering effect of a larger cymbal.

John Blackwell "Jia" Chinese Cymbals

We received two Signature John Blackwell "Jia" Chinese Cymbals, an 18" and a 20". The 18" cymbal is lathed around its 2"-wide flange; the 20" cymbal is lathed around its 3"-wide flange. The remaining surfaces are unfinished. The metal on the inner diameter of each cymbal feels thicker than that of the lathed flanges. There are no bells on the cymbals. The 18" cymbal's center is flat where the bell would be, while the bell area on the 20" follows the contour of the cymbal.

The unlathed inner surface of both cymbals has an unfinished, mottled look, with streaks running in all directions over the background of the bronze metal. This is a result of the tin oxide coming through to the surface of the cymbal during forming. The unlathed area helps to give the cymbals a dry sound, and adds strength to what is essentially a fairly thin design. Both cymbals have clearly visible small hammer marks on the top and bottom inner surfaces.

I mounted the cymbals upside-down, so I could hit the flange without concern for my sticks or the cymbals' edges. Both cymbals produced a dark, trashy China sound. They also offered a solid attack, without overpowering the music as some large Chinas can do. The dark, trashy crash sound is explosive and very pronounced when struck—so much so that it doesn't get lost in the sustain and ring of the cymbal.

The unlathed area of the cymbals makes them wonderful to ride on. Ride patterns were well defined, with a dry stick sound that was clearly heard through the music. Thus the Jia Chinese models could function well as a second ride.

On the other hand, bashing the cymbals on the edges of their flanges filled the air with a white-noise sound behind which I could lay down a great backbeat. Both cymbals are explosive yet controlled. For example, when I played repeated quarter notes, the cymbals held the volume well enough to be clearly heard, without generating excessive spread that interfered with the tonal qualities. Their crash sound was a tight-fisted punch reminiscent of crystal smashing on the floor. The 18" was slightly brighter than the darker 20". Both had sustain that lingered on nicely, with lots of overtones.

If you're looking for a classy, explosive China with punch and attack—but that won't drown out the rest of the drums or the music—check out the "Jia" Chinese cymbals.

X-Celerator Hi-Hat Cymbals

If you want hi-hat cymbals that are sure to be heard through the band and above any noise in the room, these are the ticket. Adjectives that apply include loud, full, penetrating, hard, tight, clear, brash, and explosive.

According to Sabian, X-Celerator Hats have a special "air wave" design that eliminates sound-muting air lock. This "air wave" is actually a series of ripples shaped into the heavy bottom cymbal. When the hi-hat cymbals meet, the ripples form openings that allow the air between the cymbals to escape. This means that the cymbals impact each other at full speed. Additionally, they only contact at the ripple high spots, so there is less muting of sound. This results in more vibration from the cymbals being transmitted to the air and to the ear.

In practical terms, the sounds generated by the X-Celerator Hats are not the same as those of your standard hi-hat. Chick, wash, closed, open, sidestick hits, and stick-tip strikes all are unique to these hi-hats. Each is louder, faster, and brasher, and each type of stick contact produces a more immediate volume and presence.

When the hats are struck with a stick and then quickly closed, the response is immediate. The full volume is present from the split-second the stick strikes the cymbal. (Great effect!) When played fully closed, the hats have clear stick definition and good projection.

Ah, but play these cymbals slightly *open*, and the entire band will turn around to see what's happening. There's enough white noise here to fill in whatever the music demands. These cymbals really sing for their supper.

X-Celerator Hats come in Pro and AAX models, giving consumers a choice of tonal qualities as well as cost. Both versions produce a pronounced chick that will carry well through the music or during a drum break. The lower-pitched AAX produces a tighter chick than its Pro cousin does. The Pro is louder and a little more open, to the point of being almost splashy. It rings on for a split second after it's closed.

Because of their sound characteristics, the X-Celerator Hats are good solid cymbals for rock, metal, and funk. They're probably a little *too* much for light pop or jazz. But for the drummer who needs (or just wants) to be distinctly heard when laying down the backbeat for the band, these are definitely hats to check out.

THE NUMBERS

16" HHXplosion Crash	$276
18" HHXplosion Crash	$324
14" HHX Evolution Mini Chinese	$229
18" Jia Chinese	$360
20" Jia Chinese	$417
14" AAX X-Celerator Hats	$340
14" Pro X-Celerator Hats	$238

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

RMV Percussion

Ah, Brazil. The Sand, The Sun, The Surf...The Drums!

HITS

all instruments well made and lightweight

repinique and caixa would be good drumkit additions

surdo is versatile enough for film score or concert use

by Norman Arnold

Those who know top-shelf Brazilian percussion instruments will be familiar with RMV. For those who don't, their recent entry into the US market will be a welcome introduction.

All the RMV drums we tested are solidly made and very lightweight. They're designed to be played vigorously during a Carnaval parade, but light enough to be carried around all day. There are plenty of uses for all these drums, from the beginning percussionist to the pro—and drumset players as well. Let's start from the top and work down.

Tamborims

Stainless Steel tamborim

Tamborims are the smallest members of the Brazilian drum family. They're sort of jingle-less mini-tambourines. RMV's tamborims are available in four models: Wood, Alumefiber, Stainless Steel, and a composite student model. They are 6" in diameter and, except for the student model with six lugs, have nine lugs to really clamp down on the head.

The Stainless-Steel model was provided for review. It sounded bright and tight, with its solid construction and synthetic head combining to create a crisp sound. The hand-held drum is tunable and sounds great when played with a stick or just with fingers. The nine tuning pegs guaranteed a really tight sound that would definitely stand out in a crowd. This is a well-made drum that's perfect for creating the cracking high-end sound of the samba school.

Pandieros

Professional pandiero

Any percussionist worth his or her salt should be able to mercilously shred the tambourine-like pandiero, deftly playing blazing one-handed 16th notes. The rest of us should at least be able to tell the good pandieros from the bad. RMV is clearly making good ones.

Three lines are available: the Student Pandiero, the RMV Pandiero, and Professional Pandieros. The student model has a composite shell and synthetic head, and would be a great instrument for aspiring "pandeiristas." It's inexpensive and provides a great entry-level drum to begin on. The RMV Pandiero is made with a light but strong natural-wood shell that's fitted with well-manufactured chrome hardware and a goatskin head. The drum has a great sound and tone.

Professional Pandieros come in sizes ranging from 10" to 12", and in two different "looks": black shell and gold hardware or white shell and chrome hardware. Both versions feature synthetic heads.

The 10" drums we reviewed sounded great. All RMV pandieros come with tuning lugs, so they can be tuned however you like. I like a looser head sound, but the Pro drums really come alive when tightened. It was easy to produce a really bright slap with them.

Repiniques

Repinique

The repinique is a fairly small tom-style drum that's designed to provide a sharp, big sound, but still be light enough to carry all day during Carnaval. An aluminum shell and chrome hardware give it the lightness and the strength. It has twelve lugs, which is a lot for a 12" drum. This drum is very bright when cranked up, and the lightweight frame is conducive to a ringy overtone. I played it with one stick in the traditional samba style, and also with two drumsticks. When played with two, it would be a great addition to a drumset for someone looking for a unique sound. It's available in a 10" model as well.

Caixa/Tarol

The Brazilian Caixa is essentially the snare drum portion of the samba school. RMV offers two models: the 4x12 Caixa/Tarol and the 7x12 Caixa/Malacacheta. The 4x12 model we reviewed has four steel snares on the bottom head, which can be tensioned with a bolt on the side of the drum. There's no traditional throw-off. The six-lug drum sounds tight and clean, with a loose snare sound that's especially characteristic of Carnaval. The drum also records well when turned upside down and played lightly directly on the metal snare for a hyper snare sound.

Caixas

The Caixa/Tarol is a great samba drum. And, as with the repinique, it would also be a great addition to a kit.

Timbal

In the samba school, the timbal is basically a portable conga. It's a conical drum about 28" deep, with a head diameter of 14". It's made of wood and has a thick synthetic (Naugahyde) head. Its six tunable lugs offer enough control to provide a variety of tones.

The RMV timbal is light enough to be carried for the day and still produce a solid tone. When the drumhead is loosely tuned, the long drum has a deep, almost djembe-like tone that's full and warm. Experimenting with the tuning results in a variety of great sounds.

Timbal

Surdo

Surdos are the "bass drums" of the samba school. RMV surdos come in two models: Aluminum and Natural Wood. Each model is available in 18" or 20" diameters. Top and bottom heads are separately tunable, and each drum comes with pre-installed legs.

Wood Surdo

We were sent an 18" Natural Wood model for review. The sound with the heads tuned down is a really big, classic Samba sound that really pushes the music along. Again, experimenting with the tuning range is the key to making this drum really respond. I played it with a number of different mallets and sticks and came up with a range of tones outside of traditional Brazilian sounds. This could be a great drum for use in film-score work, or for use as a mini concert bass drum. It's very versatile.

Added Bonus From The Real World

It just so happens that while I was writing this review, the San Francisco band Five Point Plan was in Los Angeles to record their new CD. Their song "Prove My Love" is a Brazilian-style track that called for lots of percussion. We ended up using all the RMV gear on that track, and everything sounded great. The only non-RMV items are my LP cuica and LP agogos.

The band agreed to post a percussion-heavy mix of the song on their Web site, www.FivePointPlan.com. If you want to hear the gear in action, the song should be posted by the time you read this. I hope you enjoy the sound of the gear as much as we did.

THE NUMBERS

Stainless Steel Tamborim	$ 49
10" Student Pandiero	$ 39
10" RMV Pandiero	$104
10" Professional Pandiero (white with chrome hardware)	$ 89
10" Professional Pandiero (black with gold hardware)	$109
12" Repinique	$115
10" Repinique	$110
4x12 Caixa/Tarol	$109
7x12 Caixa/Malacacheta	$119
28x14 Timbal	$255
18" Natural Wood Surdo	$375

(877) 526-2668, www.lpmusic.com.

Quick Looks

Zildjian Anti-Vibe Sticks

Tap any well-made hickory drumstick on a hard surface, like a countertop or a cement floor, and you'll feel some serious vibration coming from the stick into your hand. This is referred to as "stick shock," and it also happens when you hit your drums and cymbals.

Tap a Zildjian Anti-Vibe stick on the same hard surface, and you'll feel almost *no* vibration in your hand. The shock factor has been reduced dramatically. This is accomplished through the use of a special Internal Dampening System fitted into the butt of the stick.

According to Zildjian, reducing the amount of vibration makes Anti-Vibe drumsticks more comfortable to play with for many drummers, and it promotes career longevity by reducing the risk of shock-induced injury. The sticks are also especially recommended for use on practice pads and rubber electronic drum pads due to the vibration caused by these hard surfaces.

When I tried the comparison test described above, I was frankly amazed by the difference in vibration between a standard stick and a similar Anti-Vibe model. So I concur with Zildjian's claims in that area. If you have any problems at all with stick shock, or if you're a fairly hard hitter, you should definitely check these sticks out.

There is one additional physical characteristic of the Anti-Vibe sticks that you should be aware of. Their Internal Dampening System is essentially a free-floating rubber insert that weighs less than the wood that's been removed to accomodate it. As a result, the sticks are a little more front-heavy than comparable "standard" sticks of the same model. This, in turn, affects their balance, rebound, and overall playing feel. If you're already used to a stick that's front-heavy (as many models are), playing with an Anti-Vibe model might pose no difficulty at all. But if you're used to a stick with a gradual neck taper and a more back-loaded balance, the Anti-Vibe sticks are likely to feel a little clunky to begin with. Whether or not the shock-reduction advantage they offer is worth a playing adjustment on your part will be up to you.

Anti-Vibe sticks are available in 7A, 5A, 5B, and 2B sizes, in wood- and nylon-tip versions. They're priced at $19.50 per pair for wood-tip models, and $19.95 for nylon tips.

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Rick Van Horn

Spaun Split Snares

Wide Open Spaces

HITS

custom-crafted shells feature double 45° bearing edges

lugs and hardware are colored and anodized

Nickel throw-off is smooth and efficient

many radical finishes to choose from

MISSES

volume and projection may be deceptive

by Robin Tolleson

The Spaun Drum Company has gained notoriety for its unique finishes, innovative hardware, double 45° bearing edges, and pure, true drum sounds. Spaun's creativity also extends to drum-finish and hardware options. Now Spaun's new Split Snares are sure to raise a few eyebrows.

Essentially, the drums feature two shell sections above and below a 1"-high open space. Spaun claims that the open space allows for air escape, providing for more volume and projection, as well as an extremely active snare response. We'll get to that claim later.

Construction And Appearance

Spaun's Split Snare drums are well engineered. Because of the way the lugs are set into the two halves of the shell, tuning is no more difficult than it would be with a regular snare drum design. In addition, the drums are fitted with Nickel Drumworks piston-style throw-offs, which are the smoothest and quietest I've ever used. Another good idea is that removing, installing, or adjusting the snares is done with a drumkey. It's nice not to have to go looking for a screwdriver or other tool when maintenance or snare replacement is required.

Spaun lugs are solid brass, which not only looks great, but according to the company helps enhance the sustain of the maple shells. They also have a very clean, old-school look. The kooky serpentine-covered finishes are applied beautifully, and the painted or natural finishes are also exceptional. Even the anodized hardware comes in bold colors. Nobody's going to miss seeing these babies.

Individual Characteristics

I want to offer some comments about each of the individual review drums. But let me preface those comments by saying that in terms of tone, all five of them sounded great right out of the box.

The 6½x14, 24-ply maple drum featured a Black Serpentine finish with white hardware. I've always heard that the thinner a drum's shell, the more the wood can resonate. According to that theory, a 24-ply snare should be a very dead drum. But the 24-ply Spaun Split Snare had lots of life, sounding big and deep. It did lack some warmth, though. Up close at least, it sounded more like a metal drum than a wood one. In terms of its appearance, there was something kind of breathtaking about being able to see the workmanship and to count all those plies so easily through the open space in the shell.

The 7x14 Carbon Fiber drum, somewhat surprisingly, sounded quite warm. It was hard to get a high snare pitch out of; it always tended to sound like a marching drum. But when I loosened the snares just a touch I got an incredibly fat drum sound. Interestingly, to my ear I was able to get a better cross-stick sound on the wood drums.

Spaun's 7x14 8-ply Blonde Satin maple snare sounds as good as it looks—and it looks stunning. It's a warm-sounding drum, very full and rich. Besides the lush sound, it was also the most responsive of the five. If I hit this one dead center, it had a great natural gate and cut-off. Striking this drum (and all of the Split Snares, actually) closer to the edge produced a good, ringy sound. That ring is fun to play with, and would certainly have to be factored into one's approach to the drum.

The 7x13 8-ply maple drum featured a White Serpentine finish with black hardware. I love smaller-dimension snares, especially if they're deep. They can really be little cannons, and this one was a good example. If struck in just the right place, it delivered depth and an extra concentration of power and character. It might not be the best drum for finesse and light playing, though, just because it would be impossible to hide anything you played on it.

Spaun's 16-ply 6½x14 drum, in Signal Green Swirl, is a real conversation piece as well as a lovely instrument. What's not to like about this drum? First, there's its subtle, understated color scheme. (*Right.*) Then there's its great low end, which was soulful yet crisp. I experimented with different snare tensions, and they all sounded good. A 16-ply shell is thick, to be sure. But I could still hear a little more of the wood than I heard from the 24-ply drum. This drum also had a generous rimshot range. If I had to be stranded on a desert island with one of the Spaun drums, I think I'd pick this one for its versatility, with the Blonde Satin coming in second.

Split Decision

When it comes to Spaun's contentions about the acoustic advantages of their Split Snare design, I agree with some, but not all of their claims. For example, your ghost notes had better be on the money when you play one of these drums, because they *will* be heard. So Spaun's claim of improved snare response is valid.

As far as extra volume and projection at a distance go, however, that's a different issue. To be sure, when I was playing the drums myself, they seemed extremely loud where I was, on the drum stool. Every beat blasted right out of the drum at me, which tended to make me very judicious, if not a little wary, about my playing.

But when I listened to other drummers play a Split Snare from thirty to fifty feet away, I was surprised at how the sound had changed. I could certainly hear the drum clearly, but the ferociousness had dissipated.

So I agree that volume is increased in the immediate area of the drum, which could certainly be an advantage when it comes to miking and for on-stage volume within a loud band. But I'm not so sure about the "added projection" factor in a purely acoustic situation. I almost feel that (with a couple of the drums especially) the sound needs to resonate inside the shell—to "stew in its own juices," so to speak—just a little more before being released in order to get its full flavor.

Whether or not one subscribes to Spaun's theories when it comes to the Split Snare design, the fact remains that all of our review snares offered acoustic and aesthetic features that make them unique and eminently desirable. If you're interested in beautifully made and distinctive-looking instruments that feature an out-of-the-ordinary design, you should definitely include the Split Snares in your considerations.

THE NUMBERS

6½x14 24-ply Maple, Black Serpentine with white hardware	$1,020
7x14 Carbon Fiber, Black Gloss with Candy Purple hardware	$1,020
6½x14 16-ply Maple, Signal Green Swirl with yellow hardware	$ 920
7x13 8-ply Maple, White Serpentine with black hardware	$ 770
7x14 8-ply Maple, Blonde Satin with chrome hardware	$ 695

(909) 971-7761, www.spaundrums.com.

Quick Looks

Yamaha ClickStation Metronome

There are many useful features to Yamaha's nifty ClickStation electronic metronome. Notable among them is a function that adds the physical sensation of touch to the standard visual and auditory options of metronome design. The ClickStation features a small, circular pad that, when held down, pulsates to the metronome setting, allowing a time reference by feeling the beat.

Although there are many options for setting various note values on the ClickStation, the vibrating pad will only pulsate to the quarter-note beat. There is also a fader to control the intensity of the vibration. It's an interesting concept that may come in handy for finding and audibly counting off song tempos in recording or live-performance situations where click sound is an issue. Teachers may also find it useful for setting tempos for students without an audible click. You obviously couldn't use this feature to maintain a play-along tempo, since you must hold down the pad to keep it vibrating, leaving only one hand free to play with.

But the ClickStation has other tempo indicators for those play-along applications. Small individual faders allow separate volume controls for audible quarter, 8th, 16th, and triplet beats that follow a green light for visual reference. A separate volume knob controls the level of the beat that accents the top of each measure—this time with a red indicator light. There is also a master volume control.

Another very cool option permits storage of up to 86 tempo settings and the creation of two-measure patterns. Using this function, you can set up a pattern with one measure of 3/4 and a second measure of 7/4, and have this two-bar pattern repeat. You can also place up to 20 patterns together in Song mode. You can then chain up to 10 songs together. This is an awesome feature for setting tempos for your band's entire song list or creating a very organized pre-set practice routine.

The Tap Tempo feature is very cool for setting or referencing tempos. You tap a tempo on the Tap/Start/Stop bar, and the ClickStation finds and sets the click to the nearest tempo setting.

Inputs include headphone jacks for regular and mini plugs, a MIDI IN jack for easy sync with a sequencer or other MIDI device, and Trigger IN and AUX IN inputs for remote start/stop of playback or tap tempo functions from an electronic drumpad or trigger device. Other features include an easy-to-read backlit LCD display, plus a 10-key pad for tempo input and accessing the unit's many functions. There is also a built-in tuner that emits tones for tuning instruments.

The ClickStation is an affordable, versatile, and compact timekeeping device for the serious student, professional player, or music instructor. Its retail price is $179.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.

Mike Haid

Turkish Studio And Sumela Cymbals

New Sounds From The Old World

HITS

Studio ride's bell makes the cymbal extremely versatile

16" Sumela crash offers attractive low-pitched character

Sumela ride has good stick definition and a "shimmering" undertone

by Mark Parsons

For a couple of generations the cymbal market was dominated by the "big three" brands, especially when it came to pro-quality instruments. However, in the past several years we've seen an influx of other manufacturers offering high-quality cymbals. One way these smaller players have succeeded is to offer products made "the traditional way"—in some cases attempting to out–old school the old school. Other manufacturers have gone the other way, offering modern innovations in an attempt to create products for which there is no current competition.

Turkish Cymbals is taking a synergistic approach to these two paths, offering cymbals that are handmade in Istanbul in the 500-year-old tradition, yet feature innovative variations on the ancient theme. The company has only been in business since 1996, but they've already achieved substantial depth to their product lineup. It currently includes the Classic, Kurak, Sehzade, Araya, Rock Beat, Rock Beat Raw, and Octave cymbal lines. To this they are adding two new variations: the Studio and Sumela lines. Both of these new arrivals are part of the Recording Series.

The major differences between all of the above lines lies in their final construction. Some are lathed, some are unlathed, some are polished to a brilliant finish, some are left raw, and some contain various combinations of these techniques. Let's take a closer look at the two new lines.

The Studio Line

The Studio cymbals are very interesting, visually and sonically. The outer 2" of the top of the cymbal is deeply hammered, unlathed, and left raw. (The manufacturer states that this hammering process allows the sound of the cymbal to open more slowly when struck, producing a more defined note with controlled sustain.) The bell is raw with no visible hammer marks. The remainder of the top surface is lathed and polished to a brilliant finish. The bottom is lathed and brilliant throughout. The models we tested (14" hi-hats, an 18" crash, and a 20" ride) all had relatively large bells for their diameter.

The hats were in the "medium/heavy" range (with the bottom cymbal being heavier, as usual). They produced a nice, full-bodied tone with plenty of projection. Even though they're ostensibly for studio use, they would also work fine in a live application for all but the most hardcore headbanging popular music. While they were not as "fast" as some lighter cymbals, they had a good response and a solid "chick" sound. One interesting aspect was that the pitch wasn't as high as you might expect from cymbals of this weight. This is a matter of personal taste, of course, but I considered this a plus in that it gave them a more universal appeal than some of the very bright "one-note" hats you occasionally encounter. All in all, this was a very nice pair of hi-hats, with wide-ranging applications for a variety of musical situations.

The 18" Studio crash was also in the medium-medium/heavy range, which gave it some serious volume and cut. The pitch was fairly high (which contributed to the cut), but the decay was not as quick as one might think, given the maker's description. For studio work I'd like to hear this model in a 16" size or a thinner 18" version. Interestingly enough, the distributor tells me that Turkish will be introducing a "Studio Elite" series, which will be identical to the current Studio line but thinner. Those cymbals should be ideal for session work. In the meantime, the 18" Studio crash is an excellent all-around crash cymbal in the "rock crash" mode.

The 20" Studio ride also proved very versatile. It provided good stick articulation, and had a medium to medium-high pitch and just a bit of shimmer when played softly. But when I laid into it, it built up just the right amount of wash to keep things full and interesting. The cymbal was fairly civilized—until I went for the bell. Then all bets were off. Yes, I could play the large, raw, unlathed bell quietly with the tip of the stick and it would yield a nice ping. But it had a big, aggressive sound when I really got after it with the shoulder of

the stick. Because of this "split personality" characteristic, this cymbal could go from swing to metal and do a fairly credible job at both. Nice.

The Sumela Line

Like their Studio counterparts, the Sumelas have an unconventional finish and a unique sound. There is a central band about 1½" wide and 2" in from the edge of the cymbal that's polished, though not brilliant. A similar, smaller band surrounds the bell. The rest of the cymbal top is lathed but also "acid-washed," which gives it a slightly rough, dry texture. The entire bottom of the cymbal is also acid-washed. This technique supposedly flattens the overtones a bit (which, based on our testing, it does). However, it also increases the propensity of the cymbal to tarnish, which the manufacturer readily admits. That's no biggie if you don't mind cleaning your cymbals more often than normal, and it's a complete non-issue if you don't mind that "vintage" green patina.

Cymbals in the Sumela line—at least what we saw of it: 14" hats, 16" and 18" crashes, and a 20" ride—are a tad thinner than those in the Studio line. And the bells are medium/small in relation to the respective diameters of the cymbals. This line is also the most expensive that Turkish currently offers, likely due to the extra steps involved in their manufacturing process.

The 14" hi-hats were more laid back than the Studio hats, having a slightly dryer tone, lower pitch, and less projection. The definition was good and sticking was well articulated, but these hats aren't going to cut through loud music as well as their thicker counterparts. They would perform well in most jazz situations and in a number of lower-volume rock/pop situations. Everything depends on the application and your taste.

The 16" Sumela crash was probably my fave out of the lot. It was medium/thin, somewhat dry with a medium decay, and had a very nice crash tone. It was not at all gong-like, as thicker crashes can sound. Its fairly flat profile kept the pitch down a bit. This cymbal would be right at home in the studio or on stage in all but the heaviest applications.

The 18" crash shared the overall tone of its little brother, with the increase in projection and lower pitch you'd expect from its larger diameter. Again, here we have a cymbal that would be at home almost anywhere, as long as you weren't looking for a super-heavy, super-bright, super-loud metal crash.

The 20" Sumela ride was another of my favorites. It fell somewhere in the territory between a "traditional," dark-sounding old-world ride and a more modern, brighter-sounding machine-made model (with a bit of a lean toward the traditional). It had good stick definition and less buildup of overtones than the 20" Studio ride produced, yet it still had a "shimmer" simmering under it when ridden. This is a cymbal a studio rat or a jazzbo could certainly get behind, but it was also versatile enough to work with most low to medium-volume contemporary applications in a live environment.

Conclusion

For a relatively new cymbal company, it certainly seems like the folks at Turkish Cymbals know what they're doing. Interesting lathing and polishing techniques notwithstanding, the cymbals of the Studio and Sumela lines are—at their core—very traditional. These instruments will likely appeal to folks who lean towards that end of things yet still want something just a bit different, sonically and visually.

THE NUMBERS

Studio Series

14" hi-hats	$554
18" crash	$417
20" ride	$554

Sumela Series

14" hi-hats	$644
16" crash	$386
18" crash	$476
20" ride	$627

(619) 846-6577,
www.turkishcymbals.com.

Quick Looks

DrumRolls

DrumRolls represent a new approach to drum "bags," in that they cover the essentials while not fully enclosing the drum. The concept stresses portability as well as protection.

Drummers often have barely enough room on the stage for their equipment, with little or no room to store drum cases or bags. This is where DrumRolls come in. Developed by drummer Rick Bourgoin, DrumRolls are covers that wrap around the shell and just over the rim of each of the drums in your kit—leaving the drumheads partially exposed. (And we *hit* those.)

The covers are constructed of two layers of polyurethane-coated nylon with a ½" layer of foam in between. Each cover has a carrying handle and a clear window for an ID tag. A shoulder strap is optional.

To pack your drum, you lay it on edge and wrap the cover around the shell. A large patch of hook-and-loop fabric holds the ends together. Then you grab the nylon cords around the top and bottom edges, pull tight, and enclose the hoops. The amount of overlap depends on the depth of the shell. The covers are designed with extra room, so most drums equipped with standard lugs and/or mounting hardware will fit fine. Even when you stack your drums, most everything is covered.

Drums with suspension mounts have a larger circumference than the actual drum size indicates. You'll need to determine the overall diameter of the drum including the surrounding mount, using a tape measure. Then check the order/sizing page of the DrumRolls Web site to get the correct size.

When you reach your gig, you simply reverse the covering process. Then you lay the covers out flat and roll them all up inside the large one, using its hook-and-loop fabric strips to keep the whole stack together in one fairly compact roll.

Obviously, DrumRolls are not designed for heavy-duty protection or major tours. They're intended to offer protection against "normal" wear and tear on drums that you're loading in and out of your vehicle yourself. I took several drums wrapped in DrumRolls out to local gigs. They did the job, got me moving quickly, and took up significantly less room than soft cases. Prices range from $21 for an 8" cover to $59 for a 24" bass drum, with the optional shoulder strap going for $5.

(425) 893-9892, www.drumrolls.com.

Chap Ostrander

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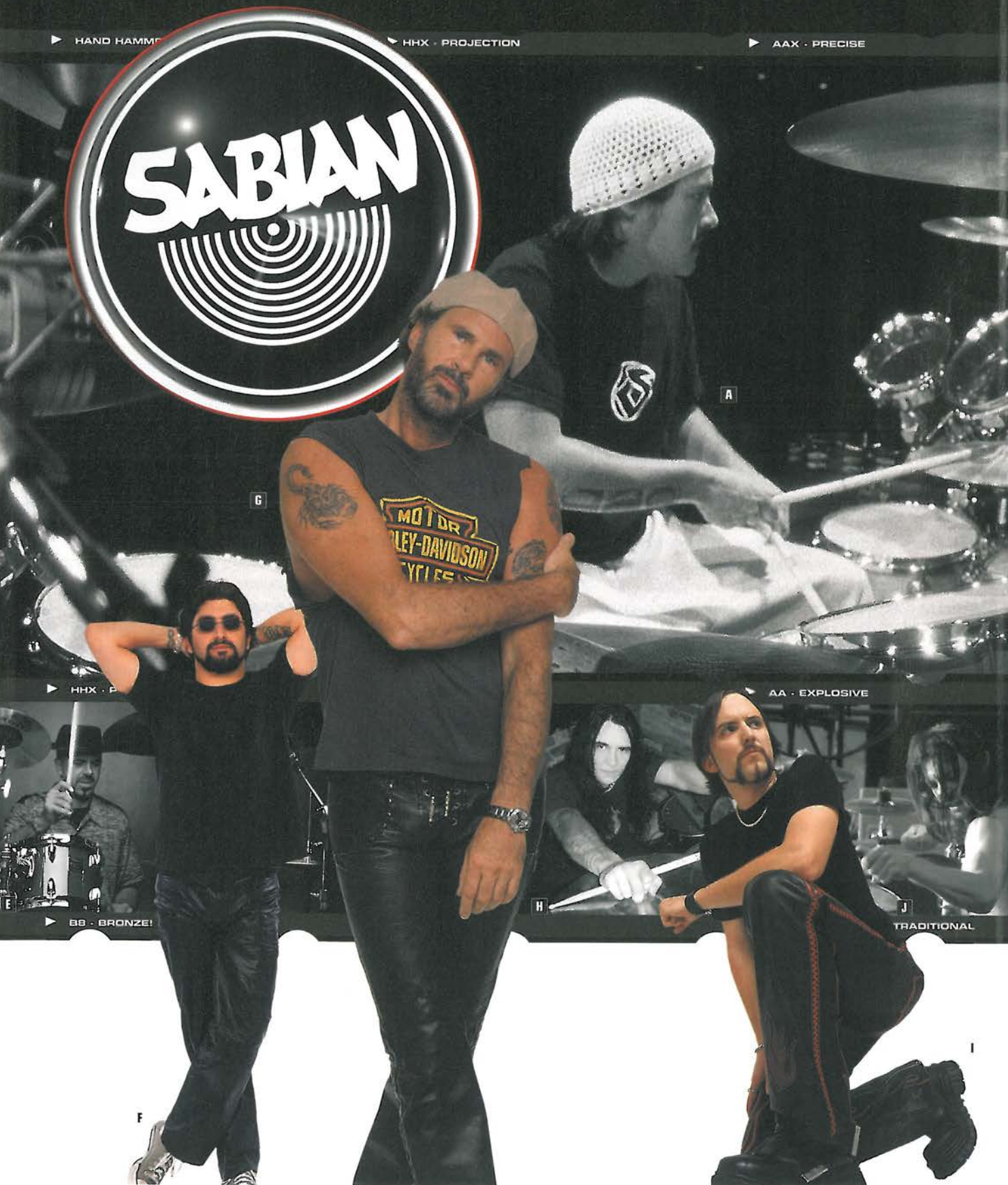
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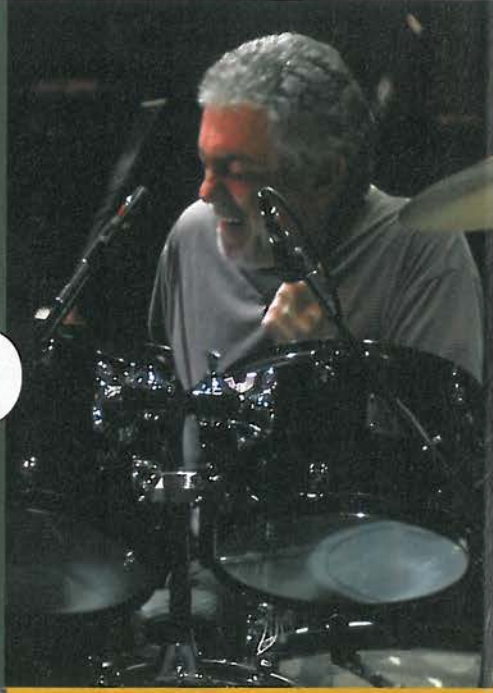
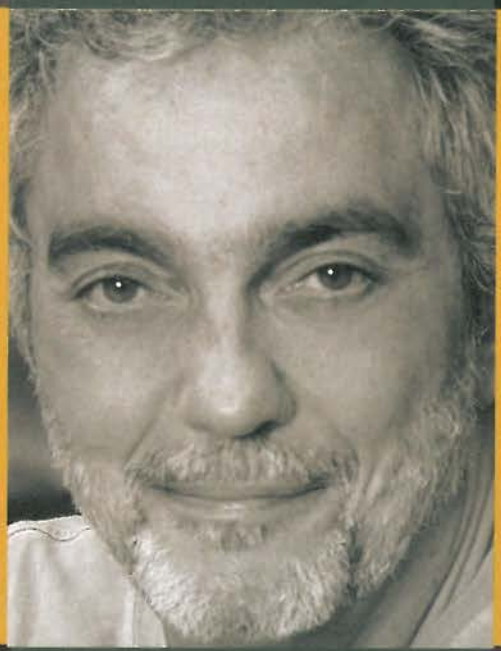
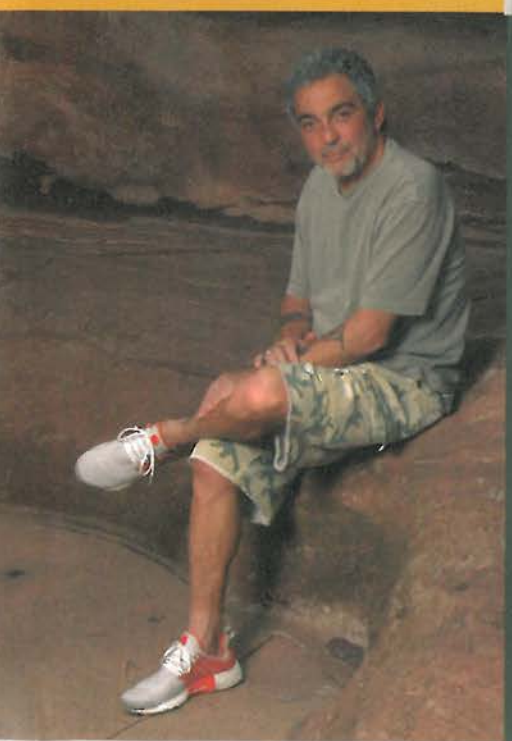
Steve Gadd Opens Up



"A strong groove surpasses all the BS. It surpasses color, it surpasses anybody's differences. It just feels good."



by John Riley



The Drumming Legend Gives His Most Revealing Interview

There's a whole lot of drumming going on. Hundreds of thousands of people currently play the drums. Through the years, perhaps *millions* have played. But in spite of all that drumming, just a couple of dozen amazing innovators have shown us the way. Of course, Steve Gadd is a member of that group, but he's also a member of an even more elite bunch; Steve is one of the very few drummers whose innovations changed the way other musicians heard music.

Gadd first came to national attention in the early 1970s through associations with such jazz luminaries as Chuck Mangione and Chick Corea. But he quickly established pop and funk credentials as well with artists such as Paul Simon (his innovative drum part on Simon's "Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover" became his best-known showcase) and the band Stuff. Gadd soon became one of the busiest drummers in New York, and the hundreds of albums he appeared on inspired legions of young drummers to aspire to careers as studio musicians.

Over the past decade, Gadd has spent a lot of time on the road, doing major tours with Paul Simon, James Taylor, and Eric Clapton. He continues to appear on notable albums, such as Simon's *You're The One* (2000), Clapton's *One More Car, One More Rider* (2001), Taylor's *October Road* (2002), and David Sanborn's *Time Again* (2003). Due out soon are DVD and CD versions of Corea's "Three Quartets" band recorded live.

Gadd was recently in the studio with Clapton, and will be touring with the guitar legend shortly. Also recently released are DVD versions of Gadd's classic instructional videos *Up Close* (1983) and *In Session* (1985), and in September Gadd was honored by Zildjian with an American Drummer Achievement Award. (A Gadd tribute DVD that ties in with the event will soon be released by Hudson Music, who also included a recent performance by Steve's band The Gadd Gang on the *Drummers Collective 25th Anniversary* DVD.)

In the past, Steve has tended to let his playing do the talking. Steve's openness, and the insights he shares in the following interview, may well change the way we play and hear music yet again.

Alex Solca

MD: I was a freshman at North Texas State in 1972, and my teacher was John Gates, who had been in the Army with you. He told me, "There's this guy that nobody knows about named Steve Gadd, and he's something else." That began my search for your recordings. Chuck Mangione's *Alive* was the first record I heard you on, and the groove was incredible. Your solos on "High Heal Sneakers" and "St. Thomas" have the clarity of Max Roach, and there is an incredible fluidity and a contemporary slant. Do you recall what you were listening to and practicing at that time?

Steve: That was done right after I moved to New York. I had just gotten out of the Army, and before that I was in school. My main background was listening to guys like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Max Roach, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Tony Williams, and Art Blakey. Then I got to New York and started hearing some funk players, so I started to concentrate more on the groove than on the freedom of straight-ahead stuff. One of the first guys I heard that had a really great groove was Rick Marotta.

MD: So he was established before you?

Steve: We both got to New York around the same time. But he grew up with a different background—more of a backbeat thing—and he had a hell of a pocket. Still does. So having come from the kind of background I came from and then hearing that groove, I was inspired to technically emulate those jazz guys but to put some of that stuff in a great pocket.

MD: I hear that in your earliest recordings. How did you develop that deep, relaxed pocket?

Steve: I think it's a matter of being aware of it and trying to do it. No matter how "out" and over-the-bar whoever you're trying to sound like did it, the challenge is to try and do it in a way where you're paying tribute to what they did but that is understandable in terms of a groove.

MD: Did you have a method for practicing that?

Steve: No, it was just a matter of being in a situation where I had the chance to record and hear it back. That's a tremendous education right there, because there are a lot of things

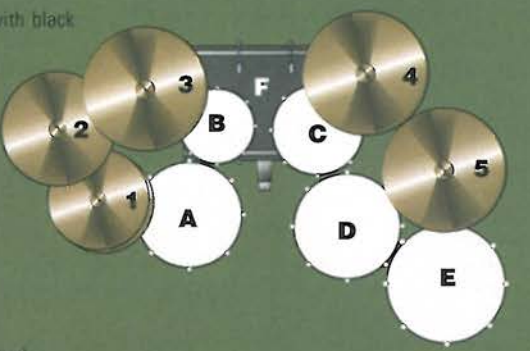
Alex Solca

Alex Solca

Gadd's Gear

Drums: Yamaha Absolute Birch, black with black rims

A. 5½x14 Steve Gadd model snare
B. 7½x10 tom (or 8x12)
C. 8x12 tom (or 9x13)
D. 12x14 tom
E. 14x16 tom
F. 14x22 bass drum (Maple Custom)



Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 14" hi-hats (old K bottom on top, A Custom top on bottom)
2. 16" K Constantinople crash
3. 18" K Constantinople Dark crash
4. 18" K ride (prototype, similar to a K Custom)
5. 18" K Constantinople crash

Hardware: Yamaha, including a DFP-9310 double pedal

Heads: Remo coated PowerStroke 3 on snare batter, Pinstripes on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors on bottoms, Pinstripe on kick batter with black Yamaha logo head on front (packing blanket held in place with stage weight for muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth Steve Gadd model (hickory with wood tip), Regal Tip brushes

you do in the studio that get very creative and exciting, and you think they sound great, but on playback you can tell it's jumbled up and not easy for the listener to understand. So you go back and simplify some things and you find out that it's a lot more understandable when you leave some space. So being in the studio and hearing things back was a good education. And then years later, when they started using clicks, when things got exciting you could tell where you got away from the click. So those were ways of testing yourself and trying to develop the pocket.

MD: Your playing is highly supportive and highly interactive. But there's also a transparency. Although the playing may be busy, it doesn't create interference.

Steve: When you're playing high-energy music in the studio, a lot of times when the soloist gets busy, *everyone* gets busy. I've learned that that's the time to *not* get busy and just be supportive. When he takes a breath, that's a better time to play something in terms of being a support player. You have to pick and choose your spots, sort of like filling in the blanks.

MD: I was in the studio once in the early '80s watching you do a Dave Liebman record called *What It Is*. I remember the rhythm section putting down a track, and then Dave put a saxophone solo on. The groove was kind of static, but he played on top, behind, and all around the time, and it was a really interesting contrast. Mike Mainieri was producing, and after Dave put his solo on, I remember Mainieri saying that something was missing. You said, "I have an idea." You went in and made a pass that corresponded to the saxophone solo. Do you remember that?

Steve: I remember working with Dave, but I don't remember that particular session. What condition was I in?

MD: At that time you seemed to be burning the candle at both ends. You were playing sessions all day, and then I remember you playing at Mikel's all night. It seemed like an amazingly stimulating but exhausting period.

Steve: Yeah, it was a great period, but it was pretty exhausting. So I don't remember that particular session. How did it come out?

MD: It came out incredible. You did exactly what you were just describing: following the emotional path that he was on, but not talking when he was talking, so to speak.

Steve: I've found over the years that the feel overcomes everything. If you get a good groove happening, that carries it along. If it feels good, there's not a lot you have to do. You can pick and choose your spots to dynamically respond to what's going on, but you don't have to technically, constantly challenge yourself to fill in those spaces.

When you play live, it's another ballgame. People can see the excitement, and that helps them put it together with the audio. When you don't have that visual thing, it's better to keep it simple. It's a lot more understandable.

MD: There's a groove that drummers all over the world refer to as the "Steve Gadd Mozambique." Going back to that Chuck Mangione *Alive* record, there are echoes of that even there, particularly on the solo you played on "St. Thomas." Where did you first hear a groove like that?

Steve: From Ron Davis, the drummer who used to play with Chuck. Ron was a great player and he loved the Latin stuff. Don Alias showed it to him. I heard it and flipped over it, so Ron showed it to me and I played it as close to the way he played it as I could, and then I maybe embellished it a little bit. But it's got such a great feel that I love to play it. It works in a lot of situations.

MD: Ron Davis was one of the guys who helped me when I first moved to New York, letting me sub for him on some gigs. Were Vinnie Ruggiero and Roy McCurdy upstate at that time?

Steve: Yeah. When I was a kid, Roy used to play with Chuck and Gap Mangione, and I would go watch him play. And Vinnie would come up from Long Island and play with Chuck and Gap. They had some great bands. Sometimes I would play with them. There was a lot of live music in those years. Chuck and Gap had bands, and organ groups would come through town. So there were a lot of places to listen to music, and on Sunday afternoons there would be chances to sit in and play with some bands. It was great. And Vinnie was a hell of a player. He had an understanding of Philly Joe, Elvin, and Tony, and he had a great pocket. So it was real exciting watching him play.

MD: I guess the other young guns of that period were Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham, and David Garibaldi.

Steve: Jack's another one. To this day he's a killer. I love the way he plays. I first heard Billy with Mahavishnu. David played with Tower Of Power. I was listening to some of that stuff. It wasn't like I studied it, but I remember hearing it. That music had a real distinct sound. I think that's some of Billy's best stuff because the Mahavishnu compositions were so great.

MD: They brought out another dimension.

Steve: But they didn't take it so far out that you lost the foundation of where you were. Your feet were always on the ground.

MD: I was younger and a lot of that stuff threw *my* feet off the ground.

Steve: Like the weird time signatures?

MD: Yeah.

Steve: But once you figured out what it was, they stuck to it. They weren't just going out there.

MD: There was an order to it, but it was mysterious at first.

Steve: Yeah, it was mysterious and challenging, but they did a good job of it. They really created a nice place for other people to begin.

MD: One guy who was on the scene in the early '70s told me that when you first arrived in New York, you were a "stone bebopper."

Steve: Yeah, I was.

MD: Was bebop your dream, and other opportunities presented themselves? Or were you *looking* for other opportunities?

Steve: That's what my background was, but I really didn't have a dream other than that it

Stars On Steve

Eric Clapton

I had heard of Steve for a long time. Our careers probably had been running parallel. I'd had a long experience of working with incredibly good drummers, but they'd all moved in and out of my life.

I had done a blues album with Jim Keltner, but he wasn't able to go out on the road with it. I had intended to do a tour based on this record where it would be quite a difficult job, not standard drumming at all, in need of a lot of research and a lot of sensitivity. Russ Titleman suggested Steve. We did that tour and it was an incredible success, and that was it.

I think this is probably the longest relationship I've had with one musician, other than perhaps Nathan East. It's that thing of having something so deeply in common that if I try other things I always end up going back. So Steve has been very instrumental in the way I've made music over the last decade.

Phil Ramone (PRODUCER)

The session that everybody talks about is "Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover," which Steve is given a lot of credit for by Paul Simon and everybody that was there. The initial feeling was going to be some kind of bossa nova, and the tempo that Paul had sung it at was much slower. Gadd was playing almost like a military jazz swing thing. If you've got the bass and drums right, things are going to fall into place, and Paul responded instantly to this military march and swing. To this day, wherever I go, I always see drummers warming up with that. It's a Gaddism.

Russ Titleman (PRODUCER)

Steve has an utterly unique style of playing; he lays down a groove that's not like anybody else's. He'll play stuff and all of a sudden the syncopated thing will come in. Keltner does it too, but in a different way. And Steve is a tremendously powerful drummer, so there'll be these explosions and unexpected, unusual drum fills.

On the Ricky Lee Jones album *Pirates* he played "We Belong Together," which is one of the greatest drum performances ever recorded. It's like this huge explosion and then this groove comes in that's just mind-boggling.

Clapton, Ramone, and Titleman quotes courtesy of Hudson Music.

Chuck Mangione (JAZZ FLUGELHORN MASTER)

We grew up together in Rochester, New York. Steve is a little younger than me, and my first memory of him is that our dads would take us to Sunday matinees to hear jazz groups that came through town, and we'd both get to sit in.

Steve was amazing at the age of eight. He was fundamentally sound in every area of the drums. He was also happening as a tap dancer. We got into music just before rock 'n' roll came on strong; jazz was still the popular music of the day, so we got under that wire as far as our roots were concerned.

I played with Steve about three years ago when he sat in at a concert I did in Rochester on my 60th birthday. I'm so glad that I've been able to know him and play with him.

Chick Corea (JAZZ PIANIST AND COMPOSER)

I first met Steve *years* ago when I did a week in Rochester with Chuck Mangione's group. I had never heard a drummer with the kind of flexibility Steve displayed on all the various kinds of tunes we were doing. We got to know each other pretty well on that gig, and we tossed around ideas about different kinds of styles.

At that time, Steve was like a blotter for new ideas. I saw him formulating his style

would be nice to be able to support myself playing music. The other thing was the love I have for all different kinds of music and the joy of being able to play it with guys that make you grow musically. It wasn't like I came to the table with all this stuff. I came to the table with what I had, and one of the things I had was the ability to listen and be challenged by things I couldn't do. And I always loved the groove.

MD: Did that maybe come from your experiences with tap dancing and rudimental drumming?

Steve: I think it comes from the way I feel when I hear it. It just makes me feel good. A strong groove surpasses all the BS. It surpasses color, it surpasses anybody's differences. It just feels good, and you don't care who's jumping up and singing and shouting and dancing with you, because you know they're feeling the same thing you are. It's like a spiritual thing.

MD: It's the first thing you hear. Even outside a club, you hear the groove before you hear the vocabulary, the idiom, the content, or any of that stuff.

Steve: And it really takes away all your troubles. When the shit is burnin' that hard, you can't think about your problems, unless you really lost someone dear, but then you wouldn't even be in that situation. But if it's just the end of the day and you're tired and bugged, when you start feeling a great groove, it takes all the problems away.

MD: People buy records to get that escape.

Steve: Yeah, music does that to people.

MD: Your sound changed from the early '70s to the late '70s, and it became *the* sound everybody wanted on their records. When did you first play the Evans Hydraulic drumheads, and what attracted you to them?

Steve: Chris Parker was using them and they sounded good, so I started using them. I had a set of drums that I had put together before I was endorsing Yamaha. It was a maple Gretsch bass drum, and I found these one-headed Pearl toms and had bottom heads put on. With the Hydraulic heads on top, they sounded like cannons. That's when I started using a 10" drum as my small tom instead of a 12". So I went 10", 12", 13", and 14", and I found that you could take smaller drums and get them to sound big by tuning them down a little bit. It was easier to get a good sound that way than by taking big drums and tightening them up, because they would get choked up. So those drums sounded great. They still sound good; those drums are in my basement.

After a while the Hydraulics sounded too dead. But it's not like I was setting the sound threshold for other people. What's going on in the industry determines what you have to use to stay up-to-date, and you have to work with the engineers. So those drums were great at that point, and they were great to play live because of the way they sounded.

MD: I recognized those drums on Chick Corea's *The Leprechaun* album.

Steve: To this day I think that's a great album for the drum sounds.

MD: Do you consider that one of your best recordings from that period?

Steve: It's not for me to say that it's the best, but I'm proud of it because it involved reading, it was done live, and it was challenging. Chick's compositions were really great and they brought out a lot of his love for jazz and for different drummers like Elvin in some of the figures he wrote. So I was honored to be on that, and happy that I had the understanding of knowing rhythmically where some of the inspiration for those compositions was coming from, because I loved the same people he loved.

MD: Who were those people?

Steve: Tony, Elvin, Art Blakey, Philly Joe,

continued on page 56

in great big chunks. From one night to the next he'd try all these different things. A few years later, starting with my record *The Leprechaun*, I had some great experiences with Steve in the studio. He created such great drum parts to the pieces I wrote. I was used to playing with jazz drummers who would constantly vary their beat, there was nothing standardized about any beat. Steve could create the most complex beat and then duplicate it when that section came around again in the tune. I thought that was staggering.

Mike Mainieri (VIBIST)

You wanna know about Gaddzooks? I first met Steve when he came down from Rochester to play on a recording session for Gap Mangione, Chuck's brother. I was one of about thirty New York studio musicians who'd been hired for the date. I remember coming away thinking, "Boy, that drummer was extraordinary."

Steve was quite enamored with the scene that was going on, because the music was so diverse in that renaissance period of the '60s and '70s. And the whole studio scene was very alive and very diverse. I think that really turned Steve on—all the different kinds of music a studio musician was called to perform. It took him a while to adapt to all the different styles, because he was a bebop drummer.

In those days, Steve would have been the last guy you'd call for a funk date. But he had a desire to learn and a unique approach. So I think playing funk was a challenge for him, and with his technical ability, once he started playing funk with Stuff, it didn't get much funkier than that. He had the jazz chops as well as military chops. And his pocket is unshakable. He also turned playing with a click into an art form. Steve always made it feel like the click disappeared.

Playing with Steve is never a letdown. I've played with a lot of marvelous, inventive drummers over the years, but when you play with Steve, it leaves an imprint on your soul.

Mangione, Corea, and Mainieri quotes compiled by Rick Mattingly.

"Everybody has their own pace of doing what they do. But if we're sidemen, we have to try to zero in on the pace of the people we're working with."

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"I've known Steve for most of my professional life. He's one of the great innovators who takes his lessons from all aspects of music rather than just the drums. I think that's one of the reasons he's given so much back to music through the drums. Who would have thought that a juvenile delinquent from Rochester, New York could have done that?"—**Rick Marotta**

"Steve Gadd has been one of my favorites for as long as I can remember."
—**Hal Blaine**

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"If there is a finer drummer in Christendom I'm sure I don't know who it is."
—**Ringo Starr**

Lissa Wales

"Steve Gadd represents one of the most complete players in the world. He has it all—technique, groove, you name it. I've been a big fan of his for many years."
—**Louie Bellson**

"I can't think of another percussionist today who has inspired more drummers than Steve Gadd. His level of innovation, sheer technical mastery of the instrument, and dedication to the *groove* in every style of music he plays has

Shigeru Uchiyama

delighted and instructed countless drummers in how good drumming can be. I'm grateful for every paradiddle, single, and double stroke the man has ever played."
—**Peter Erskine**

"It's impossible for a contemporary drummer to escape the influence of Steve Gadd. And if for some strange reason one didn't study his playing, chances are the people that *they* studied were influenced by Steve. This, to me, is a sign of true greatness."
—**Terri Lyne Carrington**

Alex Solca

"Steve Gadd has been one of my drum heroes ever since I heard Chick Corea's *The Leprechaun* album. I'm proud to consider Steve my friend. He's a great and very warm-hearted human being. He is a lesson on making the band feel good!"—**Gregg Bissonette**

"I couldn't believe it from the first time I heard Steve. Not only does he do what he does with technical brilliance, but he basically put the word 'music' right in the forefront of the drums. His influence on me

Marcus Derouin

was tremendous, as well as his influence on the entire drumming *and* musical world.

Steve's contribution to music has made a huge impact in the way drummers play everywhere. He is unquestionably one of the most important drummers that ever lived. And he's totally unique. What Steve has to say on the drums *every* drummer needs to heed, for he'll show you how to play *music* at it's highest level. Thank you, Steve, for all you've given us. We are all deeply indebted to you."—**Vinnie Colaiuta**

"Steve Gadd is one of the greatest and most influential drummers/musicians ever. His feel, ideas, and talent with music and drumming are at the highest level possible. It's an honor to know him."—**Kenny Aronoff**

Jeff Sacks

Marcus Derouin

"Steve is one of the greatest drummers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He caused me many a nights' headaches trying to figure out his rhythms, but I enjoyed doing it."
—**Dennis Chambers**

"His pocket is the deepest, his time is flawless, and his ideas innovative. In fact, I get asked all the time about a certain fill I played in the Journey tune 'Separate Ways.' My answer: 'It's a Gadd lick, and I stole it!' Thank you Steve for all the incredible music."—**Steve Smith**

Steve Jennings

Thanks to the American Drummers Achievement Awards and The Avedis Zildjian Company for these quotes.

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Scott Hoffman

Teching—And Subbing—For Gadd

When Steve Gadd had to miss gigs in Pittsburg, Columbus, and Indianapolis during the recent James Taylor tour due to a scheduling conflict, drum tech Scott Hoffman was asked to fill in. "When I took the tech job," Hoffman says, "I never thought in a million years I'd be filling in for Steve Gadd. But I'd been sitting behind him every night watching everything he did, so I knew the songs. And they knew I could play because one day during a soundcheck Steve asked me to play his drums so he could go out front and listen. The whole band joined in and jammed with me. I wasn't trying to show off or anything, but I guess that gave everyone the idea that I could handle the shows."

In fact, Hoffman's background includes more playing gigs than tech gigs. While still in high school he played with the Miami Beach Symphony Orchestra. In 1991, after graduating from Berklee College of Music and playing with numerous cover bands, he became a tech for .38 Special. A year later, when the group's drummer left, Hoffman took over on drums, remaining with the band until 1997, when he took a drum tech gig with The Backstreet Boys. In between tours, he worked as a drummer on solo gigs by Backstreet Boy A.J. McLean. In 2000 he took a drumming gig with the band O-Town, staying with that group until he was offered a tech gig on the James Taylor tour.

"I had heard a lot about how great James Taylor's tour is," Scott says, "so I was happy to get the call. Then I asked, 'Who's the drummer?' When they said it was Steve Gadd, I said, 'I've *got* to do this.' I was hired as drum and percussion tech for Steve and Luis Conte. I was a little intimidated going in because I grew up listening to Steve. But he made me feel right at home. If you didn't know who he was, you'd never know he was as famous as he is. He acts very down to earth. It's an honor to work for him."

Scott says that working for Gadd is often a matter of *not* doing things that a drum tech typically does. "Steve doesn't like to change heads very often," Hoffman explains. "He'll play the same snare head until the white coating has worn out in a big circle. By the time I change a head it has a big dent in it. He doesn't like his cymbals polished, either. The day-to-day maintenance involves maybe tuning the lug up where he hits the rimshot. And I don't do a lot of tom tuning unless something is really out and the soundman says it doesn't sound good. In most other situations, I tune for a good twenty minutes every day in preparation for the soundman to go through the drums.

"Sometimes Steve's drums don't sound good when I play them, but when Steve plays them, they sound great," Scott continues. "It's just the way he approaches hitting the drums. For example, with the snare drum, most people want the same tuning at each lug. But Steve will hit different spots on the drum to get different tones, so he doesn't get the same exact snare sound for each song. And when he hits with his right hand he'll get a totally different sound than when he hits with his left. With his side-stick playing, he's always moving his stick back and forth, sometimes hitting the rim with the middle of the stick or sometimes hitting it between the middle and the tip, just for different tones. It's amazing how many tones he gets out of a snare drum.

"I've learned so much from sitting behind Steve," Hoffman adds. "He is the most dynamic drummer I've ever heard in my life. He plays from absolutely nothing to as hard as any rock drummer I've heard. His dynamic range is outrageous."

Rick Mattingly

Steve Gadd

continued from page 51

Jack, all of the giants up to that point. All the people Chick had played with or loved.

MD: But you brought another dimension to it—that groove dimension.

Steve: I love to groove, so maybe what I brought was the understanding of where he was coming from in terms of those other guys, and being able to play some kind of time underneath those figures that made it good for the music.

MD: There are a couple of other records from that period where you showed a very different face with equally successful results. I remember a Hubert Laws record called *In The Beginning*. There are a couple of great tracks on there, "Moment's Notice," and a duet you play with Hubert on "Airegin."

Steve: I remember that song because my first instinct was, "Maybe I'm supposed to play straight-ahead fast four," because that was my jazz mentality.

MD: But you played it as a samba.

Steve: Right, because at that point I had learned that if you establish a groove, it's stronger than any kind of excitement you can get happening the other way. There was no bass player, and it just felt good. And the final thing that put the period at the end of the sentence was that if Hubert has a good time playing, then I've done my job. And he was happy with it; it made it easy for him to phrase the song and know where he was, and we could play that thing together and make it sound more complete with two people than going over the barline and taking it out and trying to keep it together in your head while you're really stretching the envelope.

MD: Was there a prior take where you played straight-ahead?

Steve: No, I don't think there was. I remember wondering if they were going to say that they wanted it straight-ahead. But it worked out and I was real happy that they allowed me to play that way. We did that in Rudy Van Gelder's studio, and he had built these little cottages in there for isolation. So Hubert was in one, I was in another, and the doors were closed.

> "I came to the table with what I had, and one of the things I had was the ability to listen and be challenged by things I couldn't do."

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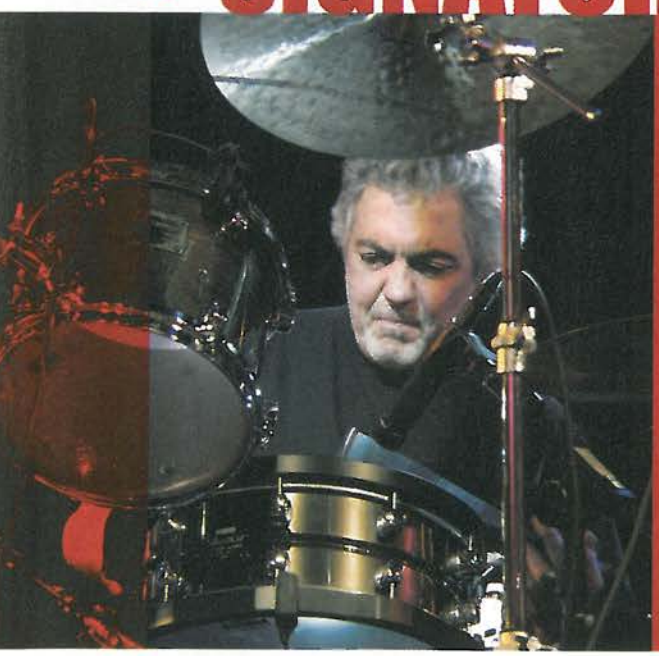

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MD: That makes it tough.

Steve: In a situation like that, the more you can form a foundation and a blanket for people to lay on, the better it is.

MD: Have things changed in that regard in the studio? It seems there is still a lot of isolation.

Steve: Well, now a lot of times you're just overdubbing to stuff. Or if you get a good track and someone else makes a mistake, with ProTools they've got a tremendous ability to fix things, move things around, and trigger sounds. The whole recording process has gone to another level.

Years ago, if one guy made a mistake, everybody had to do the whole take over again. So I'm thankful that you don't have to do that today. Doing take after take, and trying to get everyone to reach it at the same time was a whole other ballgame back then. It's different now. If people still want to get the live thing, you can go back and do it a few more times. But it isn't like it used to be where you'd be doing ten or twelve takes of the same thing, going full out and trying to get it happening.

MD: So the difference between live playing and studio playing is even greater than it used to be.

Steve: Yeah. Plus the fact that what's going on musically in the world makes live playing different. Music is an evolving kind of thing. I just try to stay positive about what's going on and what's changing, and try to be challenged by whatever I *don't* know, rather than just try to do what I'm already able to do. I love what I do and I want to keep growing.

MD: There's an old joke about the five stages in a drummer's career. The first one is, "Who's Steve Gadd?" Then "Get me Steve Gadd." Then "Get me a young Steve Gadd." Then "Whatever happened to Steve Gadd?" And finally....

Steve: "Who's Steve Gadd?" Right.

MD: Did you have any idea that your career would bloom for as long as it has?

Steve: Naw, I had no idea. You just try to stay grateful for what you've got. I'm thankful for what I've got today, and for the fact that I've been doing it for as long as I have, and that I still love it.

MD: If we can keep groceries in the refrigerator and play music that stimulates us, man, it doesn't get much better than that.

Steve: No, if you can do what you like for a living, that's great. And you'd *better* find something to do for a living that you like because you're going to have to do it for a while.

MD: We met at PASIC in Phoenix in 1995 at a Zildjian reception. The next morning, you called my hotel room and asked if I would like to join you for a run. It was 5:30 in the morning, and you said you couldn't sleep because you were nervous about the clinic you were going to do later that day. So I met you in the lobby and we had a great time, but I was surprised that *you* were nervous about doing a clinic.

Steve: That's because I don't do a lot of them. Once I do a few in a row, I kind of get a thing happening. But when you just do one every once in a while, you're not sure if they're going to ask any questions, and I'm wondering if I'll end up sitting there just playing for an hour and a half.

MD: [laughs] There could be worse things.

Steve: Yeah, but I'd run out of things to play after fifteen minutes.

MD: I've got a hundred records that prove you wrong.

Steve: Well.... It's just that I'd like to be informative and encouraging, and the audience has to be a participant in that kind of thing. So I'm grateful when it happens. And I get nervous about not knowing if it *is* going to happen. But after I've done a few of them I have a little more knowledge about where it's going to go, and the lulls don't make me as nervous.

MD: You've been playing with Eric Clapton, James Taylor, and Paul Simon for many years. How does each situation challenge you, and what adjustments do you make to help bring each man's music to life?

Steve: The only adjustment I make is I just listen. And I don't try to come in with a preconception of what has to be done. I just let whatever goes down go down, and try to be in the present so I don't have to overcome any BS in my own head to get to the music.

MD: Did it take you a long time to get to that place?

Steve: Yeah, I think it did. It's nice because I know these guys, so that makes me feel more relaxed. It's not just about the music; it's also about getting to know these people and understanding them. Everybody has their own pace of doing what they do. But if we're sidemen, then we have to try to zero in on the pace of the people we're working with and try to stay in the moment and keep our ears open for what the music is, trusting that the music speaks for itself. You do the best you can that way, and if there are things that need to be tweaked dynamically, form-wise, or feel-wise, if you've heard the music, then you know what you're talking about, rather than talking about it before you even play it.

MD: Right, and if you play too much, you don't really hear the music the first time around.

Steve: Yeah, keep your ears open and just let the music happen.

MD: Do you use different gear on each gig?

Steve: I've got a set that I like with a couple of different sized toms and different kinds of

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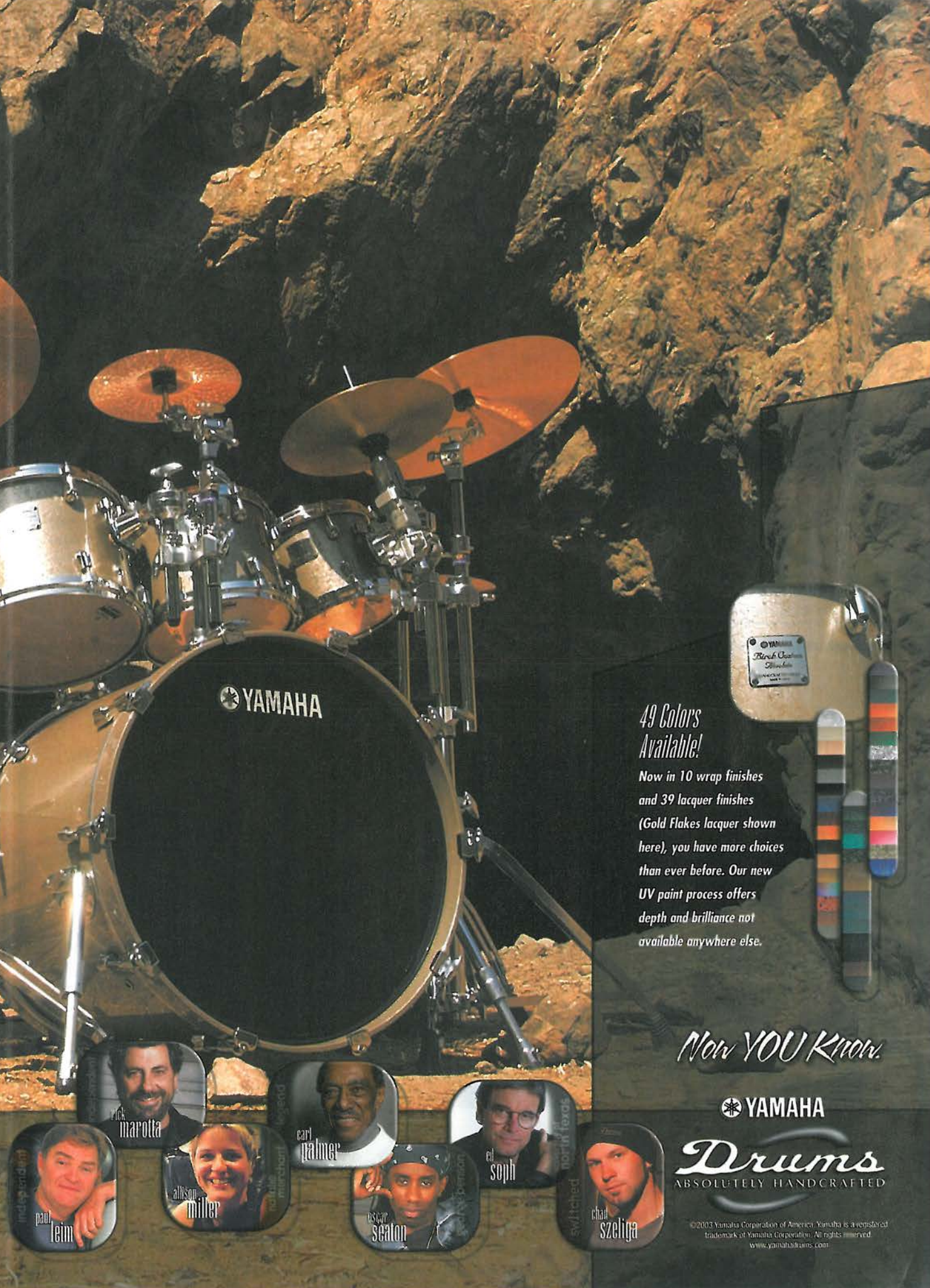
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snare drums. With Paul Simon, we do a lot of experimental things with different kinds of drums—like real small bass drums—because that's what interests Paul. He's constantly looking for something new, something he hasn't done. His challenge is that he's always looking to not repeat himself.

MD: It's great to be part of a situation like that.

Steve: It is. And it's challenging, too. With other people, it's not like they're looking for something that's never been done; they're just looking for something that sounds good.

MD: And that makes them feel comfortable.

Steve: Yeah, so I've got drums that sound good, plus they've got engineers who are masters. So the gear is one thing, but with all of the state-of-the-art technology, sometimes it's out of your hands. They can take what you give them and add things to it or re-EQ it. So as long as you're in the ballpark and are open to working with other people who are doing the same thing you want to do, which is make the music that the artist wants, then you're fine.

MD: I remember seeing you several times with Michel Petrucciani, and I was struck by the fact that you never had the drums miked and you never used a monitor. I can appreciate the intimacy that brings to the music.

Steve: I did use a monitor, but I didn't let them mike the drums in the house. For that kind of playing, if I hear the drums out in the house louder than I am intending them to be, or if I'm playing real soft and they turn them up, I just can't play. So I wouldn't let them mike the drums separately. They used an overhead, a bass drum mic', and a snare drum mic', and I would have a little bit of foot in the monitor, a lot of Michel, and some bass. With a trio, you can hear yourself acoustically. And for that kind of playing, when the dynamics go from triple *forte* to triple *piano*, there's no way a sound guy can be riding the levels and not get in the way. He's got to just get it in the ballpark and leave it alone. If I'm playing real soft and they don't hear it in the back row, then they're not supposed to hear it in the back row. Or they're supposed to listen real hard, or they're supposed to just *look* and see what's going on. Not everything needs to be heard.

MD: I guess the dynamic range is a little smaller with Eric Clapton, Paul Simon, and James Taylor. Is the monitor situation different?

Steve: The monitor situation is different for every job. For every situation, I have to find out what I need to be able to do what I need to do. My situation will change from song to song sometimes. Getting the right level in the monitor—to get what I need and take out what I don't need to lock in with the groove—is a big part of what I have to do to get myself in a place to enjoy the playing.

MD: Generally, do you have less drums in the monitor than anything else?

Steve: I want to hear myself, but generally I have less of me. What I need to hear, what I need to feel, is that what I'm playing, especially if it's soft, is being heard by other people. You have to be sure you are where you need to be and that you hear what you need to hear to hold the thing together.

MD: Are you playing with sequenced tracks or clicks on any of these gigs?

Steve: No, but I have a metronome, so if I count off things I'm pretty close to where James wants it, because James is really conscious of tempos.

MD: You have the uncanny ability to find the right groove orchestration for each section of a tune. Can you speak about the process of building a drum track?

Steve: Well, it used to be I'd find something that worked for the intro, then at letter A I'd add something, at letter B I'd try to move it up a notch, go back to letter A and play what I played then, if there was an interlude with the intro feel I'd go back and do that, set up fills for different sections, and try to come up with things that feel good for those sections. But nowadays, since the machines have been involved, I like locking into a feel and really not filling when the song goes into another section. I'm not setting up everything, just

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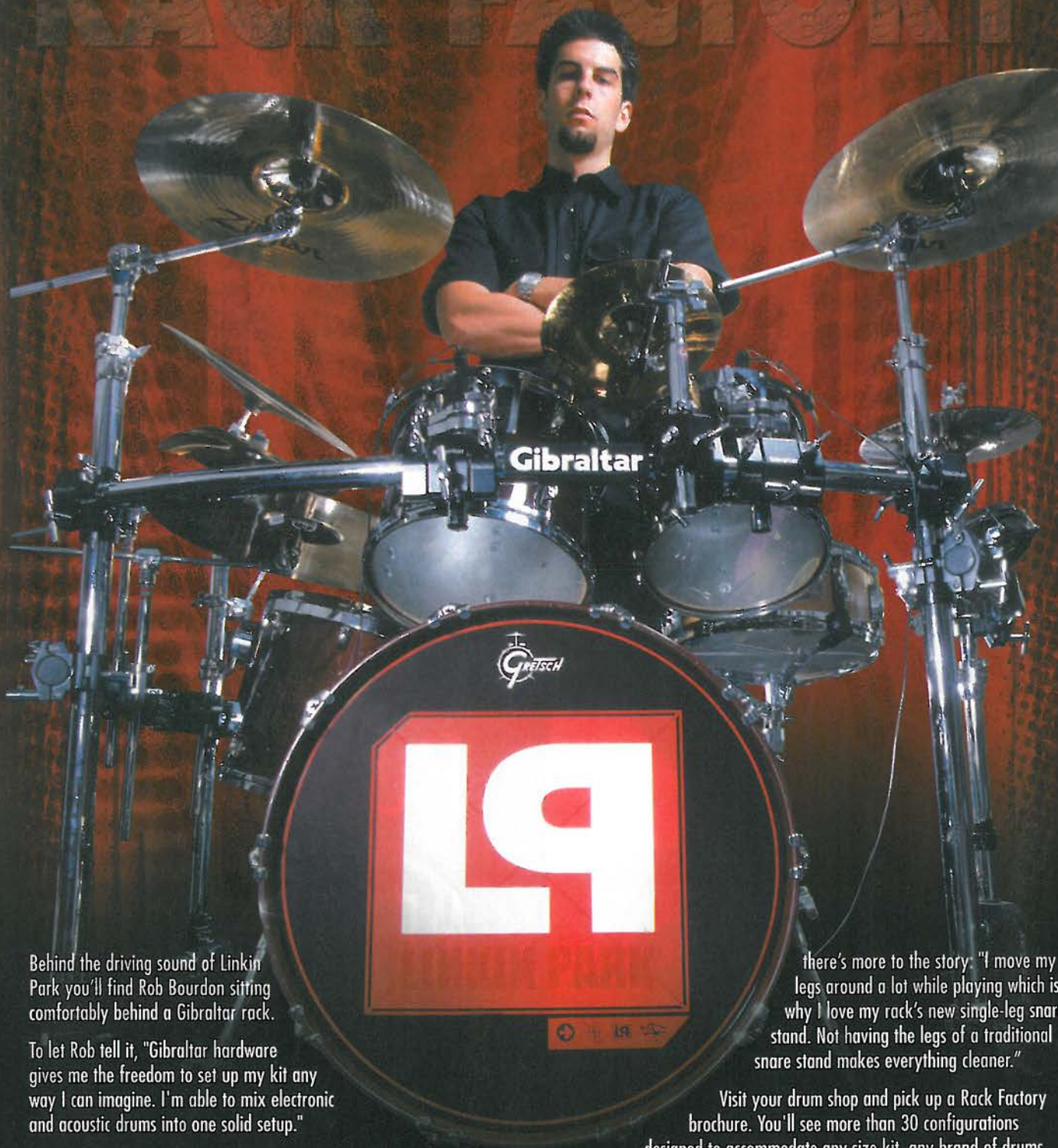

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letting the thing happen and changing it different ways.

MD: So you're not making these sectional changes you made before?

Steve: I'm not making the changes from section to section as noticeable as I used to. They might change, but I'm more content with just laying something down. I don't try to draw attention to the drums by making big changes from section to section. That's because a lot of times people are writing to things that they've programmed on a machine, where a groove continues all the way through. So when you play it live, if you don't continue with something that's close to what was there, it feels like it falls apart because it was written to a steady thing. So you have to find other, subtler ways to change it, like maybe not altering the bass drum as much, or not playing as much in letter A and just adding a backbeat in letter B. But it's more of a continuous thing. It's challenging in another way.

It's not like I consciously try to do this stuff, I just don't like approaching everything the same way I've always approached it. I got tired of hearing myself do that. So I don't try to draw a lot of attention to myself. I try to keep the thing flowing and change it up subtly without telegraphing the change from one section to another with a big fill. I continually try to just do what's right for the music. That's what really dictates where I'm at.

MD: What are you listening to these days?

Steve: I've been on the road so I haven't been listening a lot. When I was recording with Eric Clapton recently, I was driving back and forth to the studio with Andy Fairweather-Low, and he played me a lot of stuff that I wasn't familiar with—great stuff like The Staple Singers and Louis Prima. Old things that I'd heard, but I didn't really *hear* the way he had listened to it. So I listened more closely and it's great stuff.

He also played me the new Ry Cooder album [*Mambo Sinuendo*], where he does some of that old Perez Prado stuff. When you really listen to something that *deep*, it's great stuff, man. Keltner is playing some great grooves. So those are the kind of things I've been listening to because Andy's been playing them for me. Other than that, I've just been going to work and playing. Sometimes guys on the bus will play different things and I'll hear that. But I didn't bring a CD player on the road, and sometimes it's nice to give my ears a rest.

MD: You've played with so many legends. What would you like to be doing in the future?

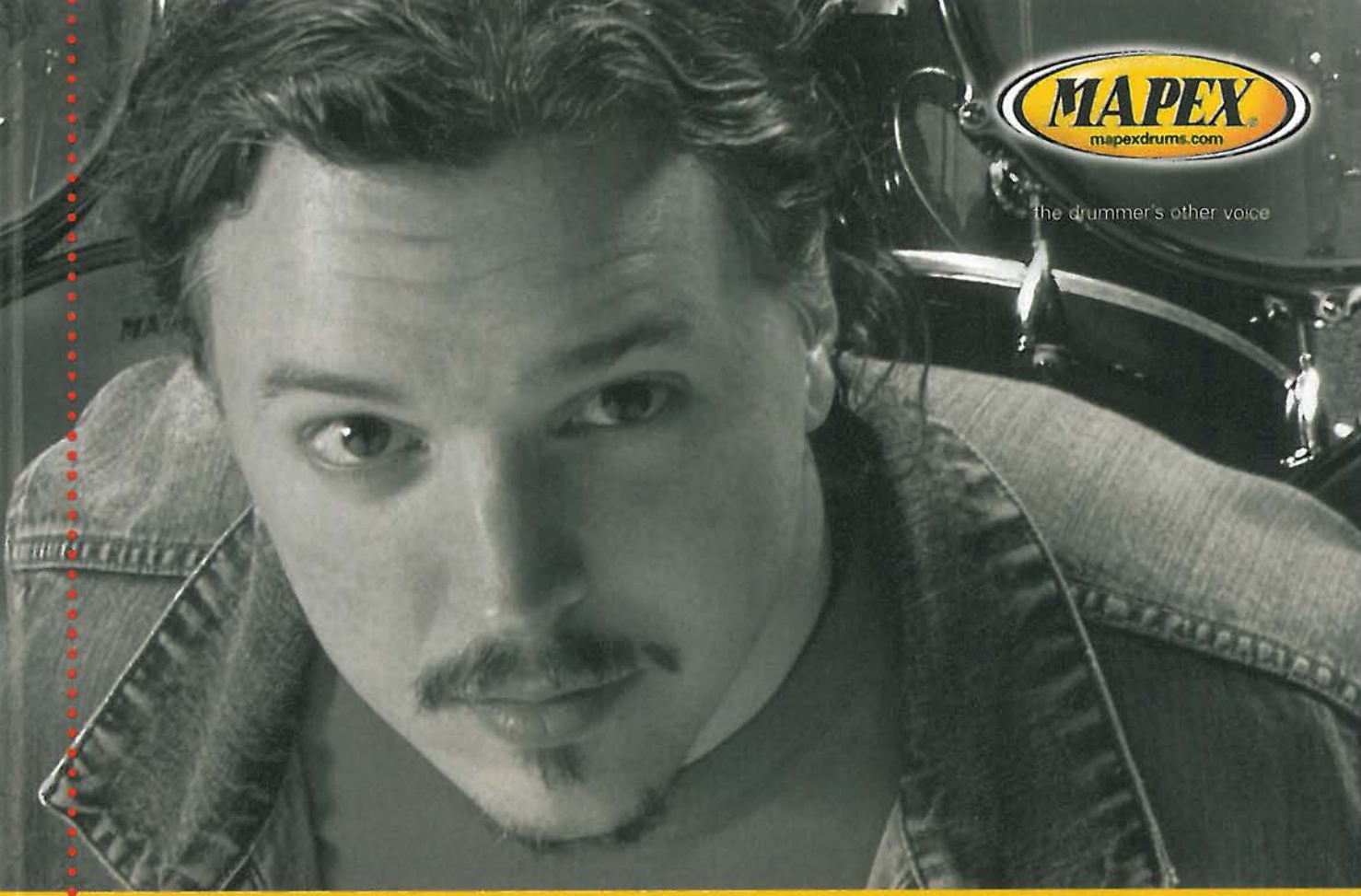
Steve: I'd like to be able to play good music and make a living. If I didn't have to work for financial reasons, I still would, because I like the people I work with, I like musicians, I like sharing music with people, and I like making a living doing that. So I hope I can continue doing that with great people.

MD: You were part of the original Zildjian American Drummer Achievement Awards, and you have now received that award.

Steve: I'm really honored, and I'm especially happy that Armand [Zildjian, late patriarch of the Zildjian Company] was honored at the same time. I'm not used to that kind of attention, but I'm happy to do anything for Zildjian because they've been really good to me. And Rob [Wallis] and Paul [Siegal] from Hudson, too; I've been friends with these guys for years. And *Modern Drummer*, too; I don't really like doing interviews, but I'll do them for *Modern Drummer* because they've been real good to me. Not that I think I've got a lot to say, but I'll certainly give it a try.

MD: People have been scrutinizing every note you've played for so many years, and been so thrilled by the music you've played that this award is a natural outgrowth of that.

Steve: Well, man, if people have gotten enjoyment or anything out of what I've done, that's enough right there. That's a great payment in itself. I feel very fortunate. I'm a lucky guy.



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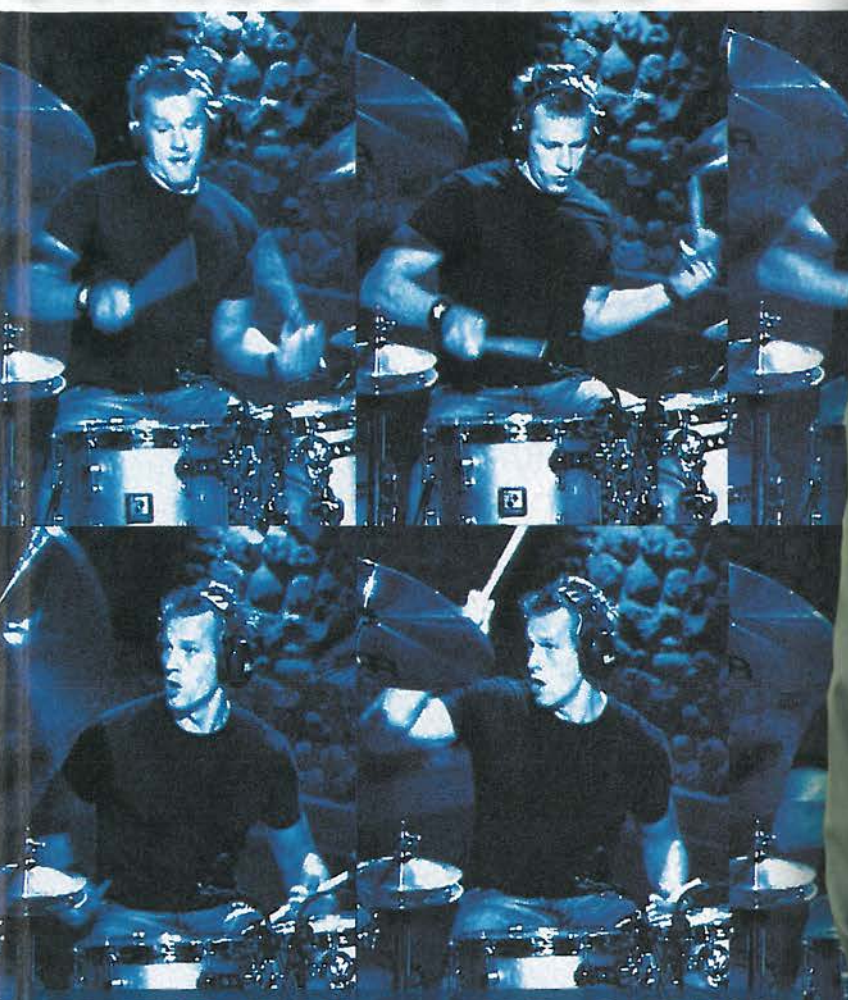

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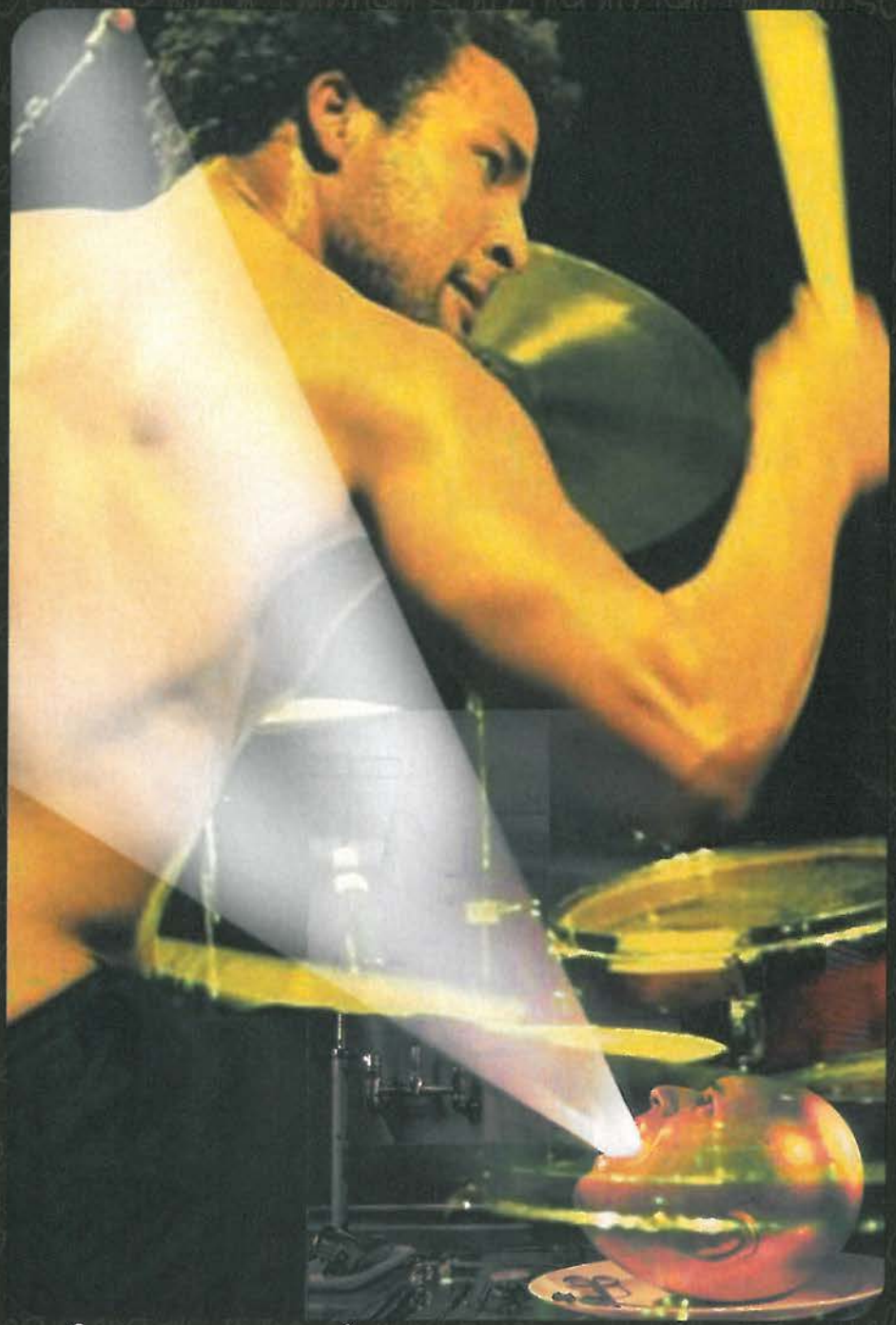


"You have to die on stage every night, otherwise it's not worth watching."

The Mars Volta's Jon Theodore

Testing The Limits Of Prog

by Gail Worley

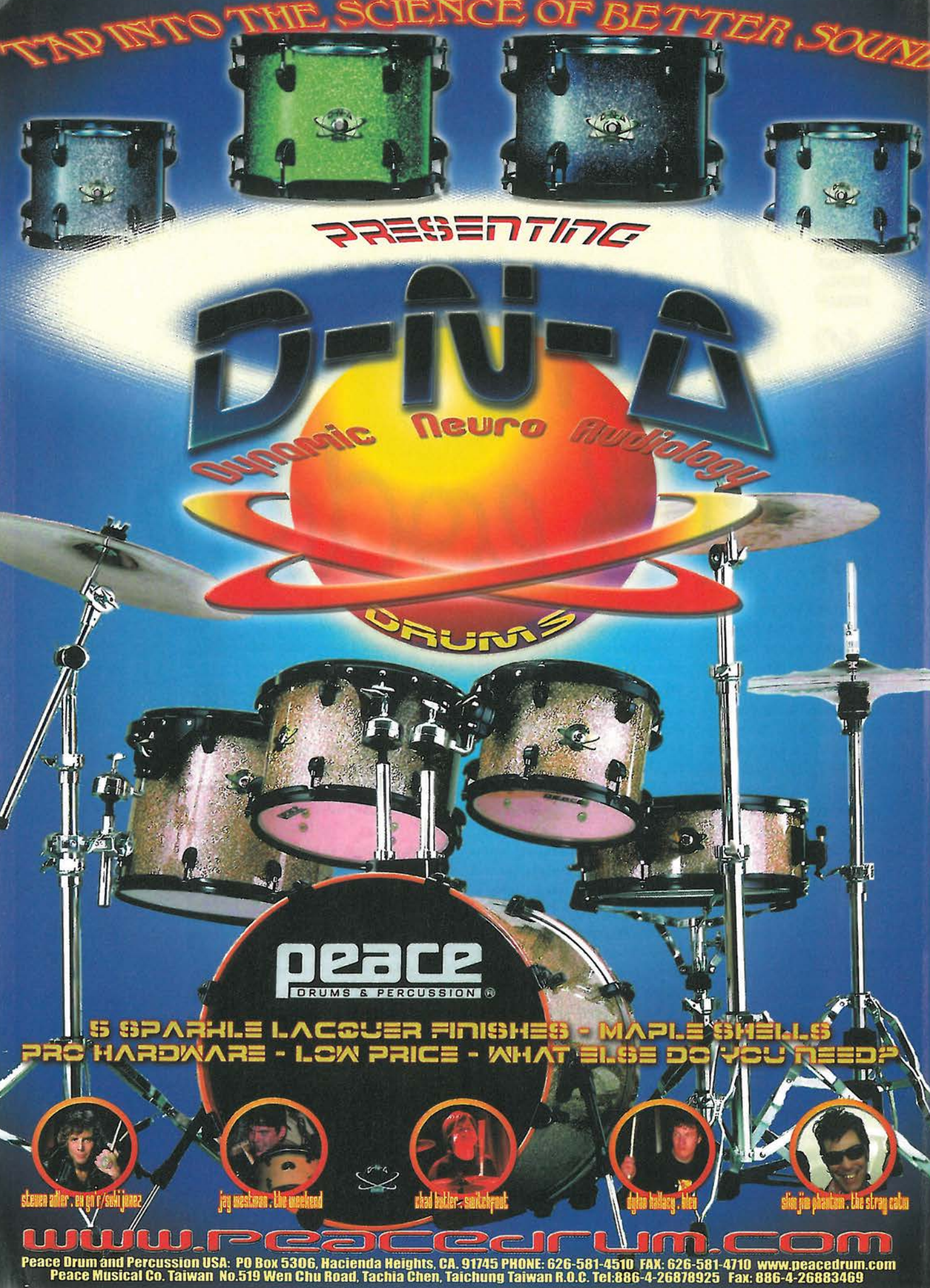
Progressive rock is a dinosaur and concept albums went out of vogue in the '70s. That's what *you* think. Right now, The Mars Volta is challenging preconceived notions about the viability of prog rock and what it means to be experimental in an increasingly restrictive commercial environment. In fact, The Mars Volta's musically acrobatic debut, *De-Loused In The Comatorium,* is introducing a whole new generation to the joys of prog.

Aurally bold, dense, and shimmering, lyrically cryptic, and deeply mind-tweaking, *De-Loused* is a fictionalized rock opera of sorts, honoring the life of late artist Julio Venegas, who committed suicide in 1996. Venegas was a friend of Mars Volta vocalist Cedric Bixler Zavala and guitarist Omar Rodriguez-Lopez, both formerly of the critically lauded progressive punk band At The Drive-In. This album is their homage to Venegas and his continuing cult of enigma.

De-Loused In The Comatorium is ambitious, breathtaking, and relentlessly inventive, mixing and matching styles including heavy rock, jazz-fusion, and Latin like a freewheeling amalgam of *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, *Close To The Edge*, and *Santana*. And exploding with unexpected rhythmic ideas at every turn is the percussive bombast of The Mars Volta's drummer, Jon Theodore. Totally unconcerned with structural limitations, Theodore's drumming is *in the moment* every moment.

A twenty-nine-year-old native of Baltimore now living in Los Angeles, Theodore started playing drums at age fifteen while working at a summer camp. "There was this big yellow drumset in the back of the dining hall that I'd pass by all the time," he remembers. "And then one day I got involved with the camp band when the kid playing drums didn't show up. As soon as I sat down, I *knew* this was something special. I was completely infatuated. At the risk of sounding totally cliché, I felt I'd found this place where I was completely liberated and, at the same time, comfortable. It was something I'd never felt before. I've played almost every day since."

From his teens to mid-twenties, Theodore played with a group of close friends in the rock band Golden, with whom he recorded four albums over the course of ten years. He first met Omar and Cedric when their At The Drive-In side project, a dub outfit called De Facto, played its first show on a bill with Golden in El Paso, Texas. Theodore has also played or recorded albums with Will Oldham, Royal Trux, Him, and members of Trans Am. But now, with The Mars Volta, his talents are being revealed.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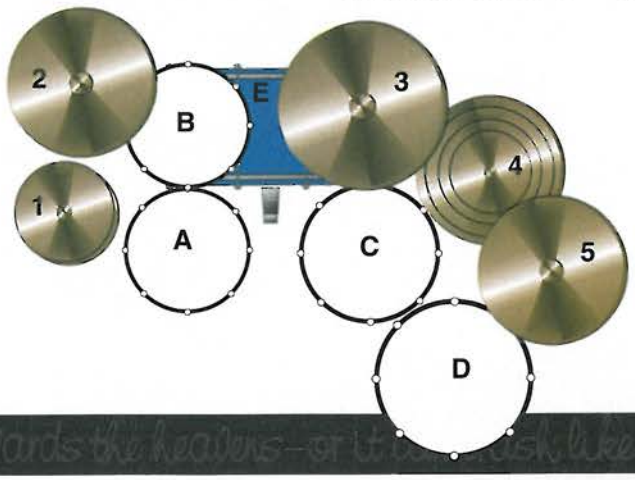

MD: You play at the level of a lot of drum legends. Which drummers have most directly influenced your current playing style with The Mars Volta?

Jon: My all-time favorite player, ever, is Billy Cobham. I *love* the way he plays. I even listen to his less than stellar '80s albums, *The Traveler* and *Power Play*. [laughs] But Cobham's playing is so natural, powerful, and dynamic at the same time. I pattern a lot of stuff after him.

After Billy, I'd have to say John Bonham, because I try to play with as much bombast as I possibly can. I also feel it's important to mention that a lot of my contemporaries are a very serious source of inspiration. Some of these guys include Sebastian Thomson from Trans Am, Tim Soete of The F***ing Champs, Doug Scharin from June Of '44, Chris Forrey, who I jam with all the time, and a heavyweight jazz guy named Neil Smith. Then I have to add Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste from The Meters, Mitchell Feldstein from Lung Fish, Damon Che from Don Caballero, Dale Crover from The Melvins, John Herndon of Tortoise, and Ryan Rapsys of Euphone. Without any of these cats, I wouldn't be playing the way I am today.

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MD: You play very hard on much of *De-Loused*. Is it tough for you to play such complicated material consistently at those volume levels?

Jon: I grew up playing pretty hard. When Golden started, we'd always knock our equipment over and get all bloody for shock value. That was when I started to play as hard as I could, to a degree that the songs sometimes suffered. Golden eventually evolved into being more song-oriented and we started to play a bit more relaxed. From the progression of bands I've played in, I evolved towards playing quietly and trying not to overpower the song.

I met Cedric and Omar at the time when Golden was still knocking stuff over. Years later, when I came out to LA to audition for them, I think they were somewhat shocked because I was really laying back. They asked, "Could you play a little harder?" [laughs]

Trying to play hard was definitely a conscious thing, and it *is* difficult. I feel like I'm at the point now where we're in this groove and can maintain the intensity as things move along. Also, the nature of the music is such that if it's time to bring it down, it doesn't matter where it is. There's so much improvisation going on, we can take it wherever we need it to go. But in my opinion, you've got to sweat. You have to die on stage every night, otherwise it's not worth watching.

MD: The transitions in Mars Volta's music are very demanding, both musically and physically. How do you prepare yourself for these severe "left turns" live, especially where you might be going from playing really hard to going into a very subtle, nuanced section?

Jon: I think I'm naturally inclined to that type of playing. All the practicing I've done and all the lessons I've taken have been about dynamics. In this band, we feel that dynamics are absolutely the most important thing. It's important to be able to stop on a dime.

The little breaths, pauses, and hook-ups that happen in our music excite us. It's about being vigilant of the song structure, but not to the degree that you prohibit yourself from actually playing to your fullest ability. You can try and predict it, but it doesn't always happen where it's supposed to. It's just about remaining sensitive to the flux and being able to change it up.

"With so much improvising going on, the music can be spectacular, completely connected, and spiraling towards the heavens—or it can crash like a jumbo jet."

MD: There are so many areas of unstructured music in The Mars Volta. How does the band come up with the freeform elements of its material? Some of it sounds like it follows or emanates from the drums.

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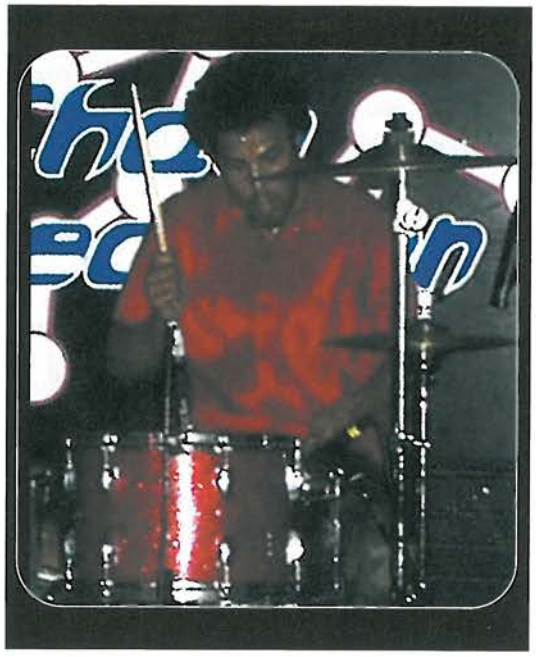
Jon: I think that's true. We listen to all types of music, and even things that aren't music, for inspiration. A lot of what we listen to features the interaction between players. To us, one of the most important things, above and beyond the songs, is *how* they're being played. Songs are just vehicles for us to relate to each other.

That said, Omar turned me on to The Fania All-Stars, players from Puerto Rico who moved to New York City and mixed salsa with the Brown Sound of the early '70s. Any Fania All-Stars record kicks ass. Everybody solos all the time, and there's some amazing interaction going on.

I get a lot of inspiration from listening to bands that jam, like The Allman Brothers or any good jazz combo. I prefer music that's subject to nightly reinterpretation. A record or song is just a snapshot in time. Of course, with so much improvising going on, the music can be spectacular, completely connected, and spiraling towards the heavens—or it can crash like a jumbo jet. You run the risk of disaster every second. But I like walking the tightrope.

MD: How much *are* you improvising on stage? Do you stick with any of the parts on the record?

Jon: It varies, depending on how we feel. On this last tour, our record had just come out, so we played several shows where we performed the record all the way through. Of course, it's less than an hour long, and our show is an hour and forty-five minutes, so things do vary.



We just played a huge festival in Japan with all these crazy bands. We were all so offended by the proliferation of guys in tapered black pants and wearing eye makeup that we took it upon ourselves to represent other angles. We played a fifty-minute set comprised of three songs. We're very reactionary, in the way that chemicals are reactionary. I try never to be inhibited by a preexisting condition. If there's a verse coming, and you don't *feel* that verse—for whatever reason—and you stumble onto some other exciting way of making it happen, then you do it.

It's my nature to use my ears more than my eyes. In fact, I'm guilty of playing with my eyes shut a lot. Above all else, we *listen* to each other so that if something like that goes down—or I should say *when* something like that goes down—we're all able to react quickly.

MD: The band has a few different styles dropping in and out of the music—heavy rock, fusion, Latin. Was that a goal for the band, to merge these differing styles together?

Jon: That's a very crucial question. Our band is like a rainbow of fruit flavors: different people coming from a lot of different angles. On one level, this band works because none of us are constrained by any genre boundaries in music or in any part of life. We were fortunate to come together and all be open-minded enough that we could go with whatever anyone had to bring to the table.

MD: Your drum sound is kind of '70s-ish on *De-Loused*—dry and not very open. Is that what you were going for in order to best serve the music, or did it just work out that way?

Jon: I prefer more "body" in a drum sound, but we worked on this record with producer Rick Rubin, who had other ideas. We discussed our intentions at length and he eventually convinced me it would be a good idea to get as tight a drum sound as possible. Since there's so much guitar, voice, keyboard, and bass—plus so many effects on the voice—the tighter and crisper the drum sounds, the louder they could be in the mix.

Originally I had gotten my hands on this huge stainless steel kit, like the one that Bonham used on *In Through The Out Door*. I had a gong behind it and was using ride cymbals for crashes. It sounded amazing and wide-open in the room we recorded in. I thought it was the best drum sound I'd ever gotten, and I was prepared to track the entire album that way. But then Rick said, in light of what we decided, that kit wasn't going to work.

We then went to the other extreme, using a small wood-shelled set that had holes in the bottom heads and tape on the top heads. That was too far in the other direction, so we compromised by going back to the big set, cutting a hole in the front bass drum head, and putting tape on the toms.

I was skeptical at first and concerned that there wouldn't be enough resonance, because I like to play whole notes. If things are really dead, I don't feel like I can imply as much. Rick was like, "Don't imply it, just play it." If he hadn't been so vigilant, I would have gone with a big, wide-open sound.

Making *De-Loused* was really challenging for me, but it was a learning experience, without a doubt. I'm very proud of this record.

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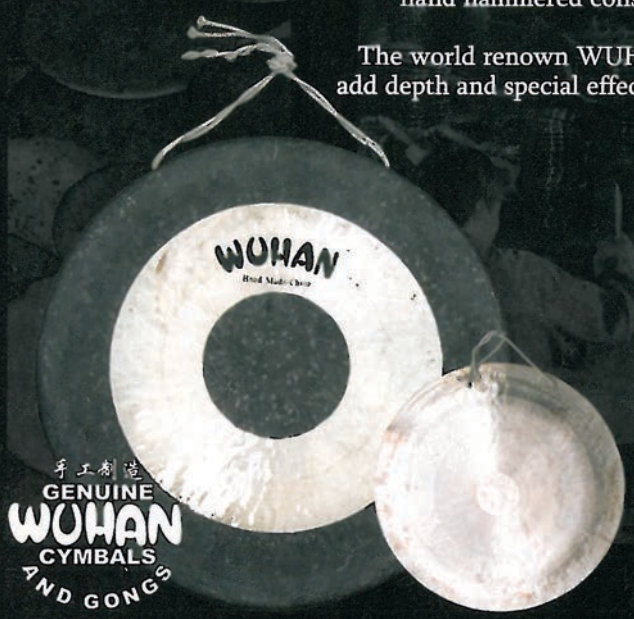

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David Bowie's Sterling Campbell

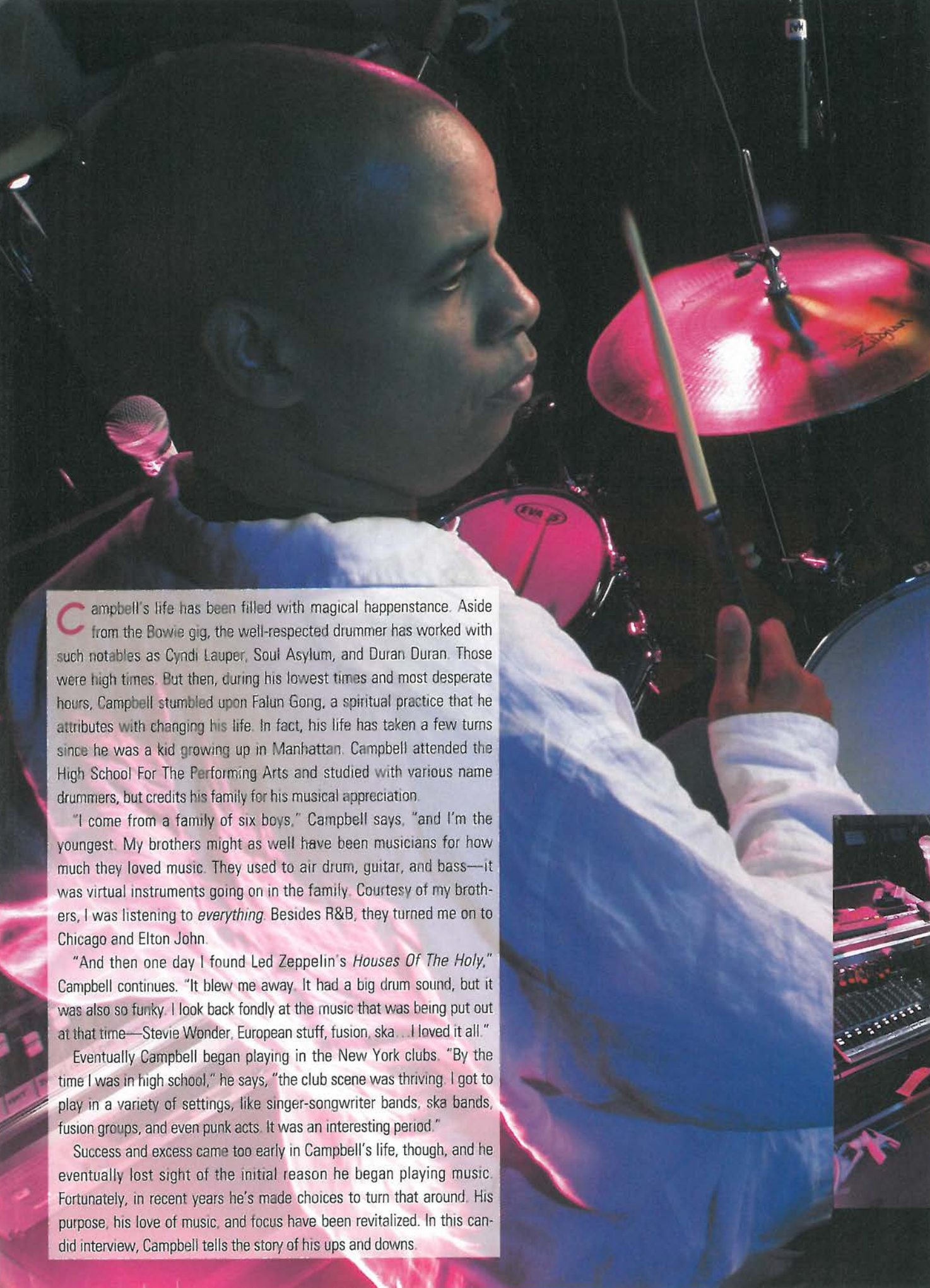
The Reality Of ROCK STARDOM

Story by Robyn Flans

Photos by Paul La Raia

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. When Sterling Campbell was fourteen, David Bowie's then drummer, Dennis Davis, moved into Sterling's New York apartment building. When they met in the lobby, Davis invited Campbell to accompany him to Madison Square Garden, where the drummer was performing with David Bowie. While Campbell revered the music of Bowie and other European groups, no one could predict that years later, in 1992, *he* would be playing with the rock legend. And now, Campbell is on Bowie's latest album, *Reality*, and is on a tour that will hit seventeen countries over a seven-month period.

EVANS



Campbell's life has been filled with magical happenstance. Aside from the Bowie gig, the well-respected drummer has worked with such notables as Cyndi Lauper, Soul Asylum, and Duran Duran. Those were high times. But then, during his lowest times and most desperate hours, Campbell stumbled upon Falun Gong, a spiritual practice that he attributes with changing his life. In fact, his life has taken a few turns since he was a kid growing up in Manhattan. Campbell attended the High School For The Performing Arts and studied with various name drummers, but credits his family for his musical appreciation.

"I come from a family of six boys," Campbell says, "and I'm the youngest. My brothers might as well have been musicians for how much they loved music. They used to air drum, guitar, and bass—it was virtual instruments going on in the family. Courtesy of my brothers, I was listening to *everything*. Besides R&B, they turned me on to Chicago and Elton John.

"And then one day I found Led Zeppelin's *Houses Of The Holy*," Campbell continues. "It blew me away. It had a big drum sound, but it was also so funky. I look back fondly at the music that was being put out at that time—Stevie Wonder, European stuff, fusion, ska . . . I loved it all."

Eventually Campbell began playing in the New York clubs. "By the time I was in high school," he says, "the club scene was thriving. I got to play in a variety of settings, like singer-songwriter bands, ska bands, fusion groups, and even punk acts. It was an interesting period."

Success and excess came too early in Campbell's life, though, and he eventually lost sight of the initial reason he began playing music. Fortunately, in recent years he's made choices to turn that around. His purpose, his love of music, and focus have been revitalized. In this candid interview, Campbell tells the story of his ups and downs.

Sterling: I really got into jazz-fusion in the late '70s, especially Weather Report. I got a chance to see the group when Jaco Pastorius was on bass and Peter Erskine was playing drums. Wow. I was listening to progressive music at the time, like Jeff Beck when Simon Phillips came onto the scene. I was also into Lenny White, Billy Cobham, and Steve Gadd for *days*. Those guys were on the scene at that time, so I could see them play live.

Eventually I got into the European thing, the art-rock music of people like Roxy Music and Peter Gabriel. And what really turned me around was when Dennis Davis took me to see Bowie in '78, which was during his *Heroes* tour.

MD: What was it about that experience that got you going?

Sterling: It was the first time that I saw somebody I knew playing drums at Madison Square Garden. For somebody to have a gig on that scale was a big deal. And watching him, I thought, "I'm going to play drums!" And I got into David from there. I still dug fusion, but I was moving into the art-rock thing.

I think that Dennis has been so overlooked as a drummer. He brought that fusion of so many different styles to David's music. David doesn't have one style of doing anything, and I thought Dennis found a way to make it all work. And that first show I saw at the Garden was amazing. Dennis had a huge double bass kit—ten toms, Octobans going over the top of the drumkit, and timpani—and he played all of it! It was magical.

MD: Did you ever tell Bowie this story?

Sterling: Oh yeah, he knows the whole lineage. He tells the story most of the time. I even got a chance to perform with Dennis. In 2000, I was doing a show with David, and he invited Dennis to play percussion. That was nice.

MD: Cyndi Lauper was your first big gig.

Sterling: When I was asked to audition for her, I didn't really want to do it because my goal was to work with someone like Gabriel or Bowie. I didn't really know Cyndi's music. But I got the gig, and when we started working together I realized, "Whoa, Cyndi's *bad*." She is a major talent.

Cyndi was coming off a hugely successful record, *True Colors*. I was playing in a club at the time when her bass player, Kevin Jenkins, saw me play and told me they were auditioning drummers. I wasn't nervous because I didn't think I really wanted the gig. But after the audition they offered it to me. And even then I was thinking, "I'm not sure." I wasn't making any money, but I was saving myself for Gabriel or Bowie. [laughs] I finally realized that this was an amazing opportunity.

MD: What did you learn from that experience?

Sterling: On a musical level, I learned how to play to a large audience. It's entertainment, but it's also about pacing, setting up the fill, and playing the right fill. I was still young and really just learning how to play music—dynamics and all of that.

My attitude at the time was funny, though. One minute I was playing at CBGBs for no money with no-name acts, and the next I was about to bail on the idea of joining Cyndi's band. Then it finally sunk in: "Twelve hundred bucks a week, tour starts in Japan, free drums, free cymbals? I'll do it." I went through a lot of different emotional stages with it.

MD: That can be hard to handle.

Sterling: I think I *made* it hard to handle. At the same time, I was young. Plus things are different now. There's all sorts of information out there about how the music business is. With shows like *Behind The Music*, you have people saying what happened to them and what not to do. But that stuff was all new to me at the time. It was all a party. I never slept. I was high on the whole concept of rock stardom.

I was with Cyndi for a tour, which lasted less than a year, and I got my feet wet. It was a world tour. I was so happy to be a part of those images I grew up with in the '70s.

The Cyndi tour opened the floodgates. I got a call to go out with Cameo, and that was a different experience. Cameo was in

Campbell's GEAR

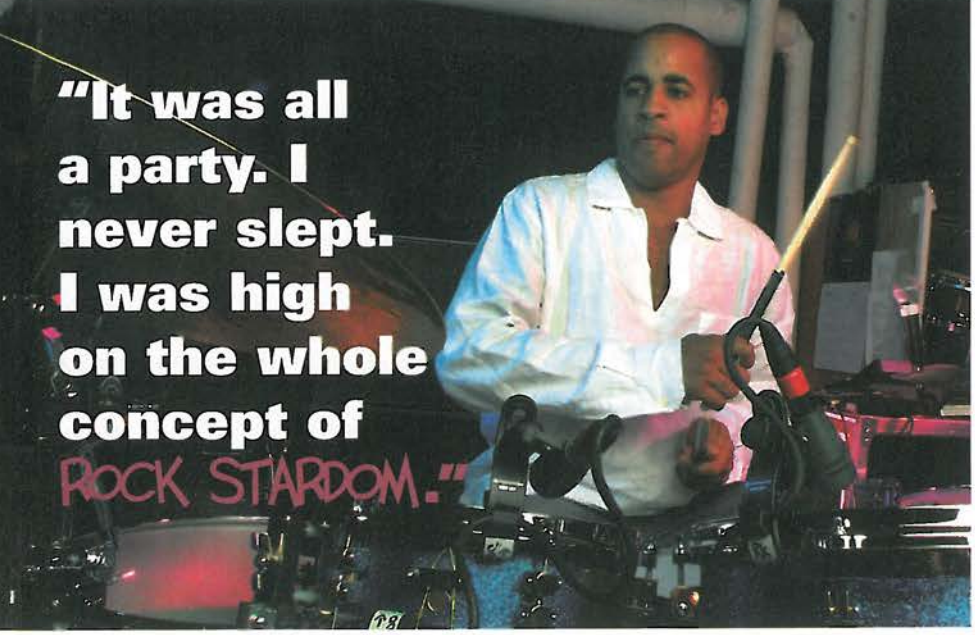
Drums: GMS in blue sparkle finish
A. 6x10 "side" snare
B. 6x14 snare
C. 9x13 tom
D. 4x10 effects snare (mounted)
E. 16x16 floor tom
F. 16x20 kick

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 15" Mastersound hi-hats
2. 19" K Dark crash
3. 20" K Custom ride
4. 18" K Fast crash

Hardware: DW stands and pedals (bass drum tension tight for power)

Heads: Evans coated G2 on snare and tom batters, Genera Hazy 300 on snare-sides, clear G1s on bottoms of toms, coated EMAD bass drum batter, EQ3 Resonant on front

Sticks: Vic Firth 5A (hickory with wood tip)



the midst of a tour, but something happened and they needed a drummer. I had two days to learn twenty songs.

MD: How did you do that?

Sterling: I listened to their tapes over and over. As a kid I used to meticulously listen to records over and over again. Plus playing in New York, I was in ten different bands at one time. Being around that constantly, I learned how to be able to pick up things quickly.

Unfortunately, the Cameo gig didn't last long. There was a difference of opinion, but it was a great band. It was the closest thing for me to being in Earth Wind & Fire—four horns, lots of vocals.

MD: Was that heartbreaking?

Sterling: No. I pulled myself out of the situation. The Cyndi thing was a lot of fun and a different head. It was hard for me to get into the Cameo head.

Then I went to Europe, because all the music I loved was coming out of England. And the first day I got off the plane I got a gig. There was a group I had met in America called So that had just gotten signed to EMI. They needed a drummer. The group didn't really take off, but I really enjoyed playing their music. It was what I was into at the time—using loops with very sophisticated music. Steve Ferrone had done their record. He's been another huge influence on me.

I did that group for a little over a year, and then, out of nowhere, I got a call from Duran Duran. This was in '87. This was another gig I wasn't sure I was interested in, but it wasn't out of snobbery. I just wasn't sure. But after I met with them and we played, they asked me to join the band, so I did.

MD: What did you learn from that experience?

Sterling: Watch your dollar. There was a lot of money flying around, and I was spending a lot. I had a great time in the group, but unfortunately it ended in a bitter way. I'm still friends with those guys, though, and I'm very fond of that period. It was fun playing those songs, and they let me be really creative with them. I also did an album with them, *Liberty*, which unfortunately was the first record that didn't sell for them.

Overall, being in Duran Duran was a fun experience. It may not have always been very healthy, but I was young and having fun. I learned a lot. Everything shapes you. I was very ambitious, and to be honest, I wanted to be a star, with all the jive stuff that goes with it. I wasn't being truthful. If you don't monitor yourself as a person, it will definitely take its toll on you.

MD: Did it take its toll?

Sterling: Oh yeah. I always prided myself on not doing any drugs through that whole period with Duran. I drank a little, but I wasn't a drinker. However, as time went on.... There's a bizarre ego factor. You've got a lot of people telling you how great you are, and you start believing it. There weren't people telling me, "Hey man, you need to check yourself out."

MD: Regrets?

Sterling: I used to have regrets about it. When I look back, I kind of shake my head because I'm not about that anymore. I was always in search of something and trying to find myself. After the Duran thing, I kept

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spiraling. From not looking into myself, I started doing things that weren't right. After a while, you start doing things, you're not being truthful to the work, and you're dealing with your ego. It got to the point where drugs started coming in. That happened after the Duran thing. By '95 I was a mess.

MD: What pulled you back? There had to be a moment of reckoning.

Sterling: I realized I was doing everything I was against. I finally woke up to the fact that I wasn't going in the right direction. I was searching for something deeper, even though my career was going okay—I was working with Soul Asylum in the mid-'90s.

With the drugs, you can't think right. I started separating myself from the guys in Soul Asylum because of the drugs. I wasn't happy. I lost focus. At one point, I called the guys and told them I had to quit. I would finish the album we were working on, but after that I had to go. That was hard.

MD: How did you get clean?

Sterling: It's an incredible story. I went for a walk in a park in Manhattan, and I saw a group of people doing these strange exercises. Something drew me to it. The next day I called the contact person for what's called Falun Gong. I found out it isn't a religion. I went down the next day, learned the practice and the principles of raising your virtue, and how, when you do that, it affects how your body responds. I started getting involved with it, and three weeks into the practice my addiction problems were gone. That was in '98. I realized I'd stumbled onto something very profound and powerful, and I've been doing it ever since.

I feel Falun Gong has improved me as a musician because it's not about me anymore. It's really about giving to the music. I'm getting ready to go on tour with David now, and I'm training for it. I'm trying to make it the best I possibly can. It's pretty demanding. We're learning fifty songs.

It's amazing working with David. He leaves you to your own devices, whether it's recording or live. And David's music is so interesting, with so many different styles and twists and turns to be navigated.

Sterling TRACKS

Recordings

Artist	Album
Soul Asylum	Grave Dancer's Union
David Bowie	Black Tie White Noise
Duran Duran	Liberty
David Bowie	Reality
David Bowie	Live At The BBC
David Bowie	Heathen
David Bowie	Outside

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
David Bowie	Heroes	Dennis Davis
David Bowie	Scary Monsters	Dennis Davis
Talk Talk	Spirit Of Eden	Lee Harris
Roxy Music	Avalon	Andy Newmark
Simple Minds	Sparkle In The Rain	Mel Gaynor
The Police	all	Stewart Copeland

Sterling Campbell

MD: You were with David for a while, then you weren't, and now you're back. How did that work?

Sterling: It was just timing. I did two records with David—*Black Tie White Noise* and *Outside*, which was my dream because I got to work with David and Brian Eno. This was in the early '90s.

MD: This was before you got yourself together.

Sterling: I was working, even though my behavior was erratic. Then by the time we finished the album, David was talking about touring, but then it didn't happen. Well, Soul Asylum came along, and I had to work. Of course, then David called about the tour. I told him I couldn't do it, but that he should get Zachary Alford. It actually worked out for the best, because I wasn't in the right state of mind to be with David then. I'm so happy it worked out that way. Zachary was a much better choice. He did David's *Earthling* record, which is amazing.

MD: Of your recorded work, what three tracks are you proudest of?

Sterling: There was a track on the record I did with Duran Duran, *Liberty,* called "Serious." I guess what I like about it more than anything is, first of all, it reflected the mood I was in. It was fun. I was this young kid in this huge pop band. I was having a great time, making a record, and living in England. Plus it was one of the first records where I felt I had some creative input.

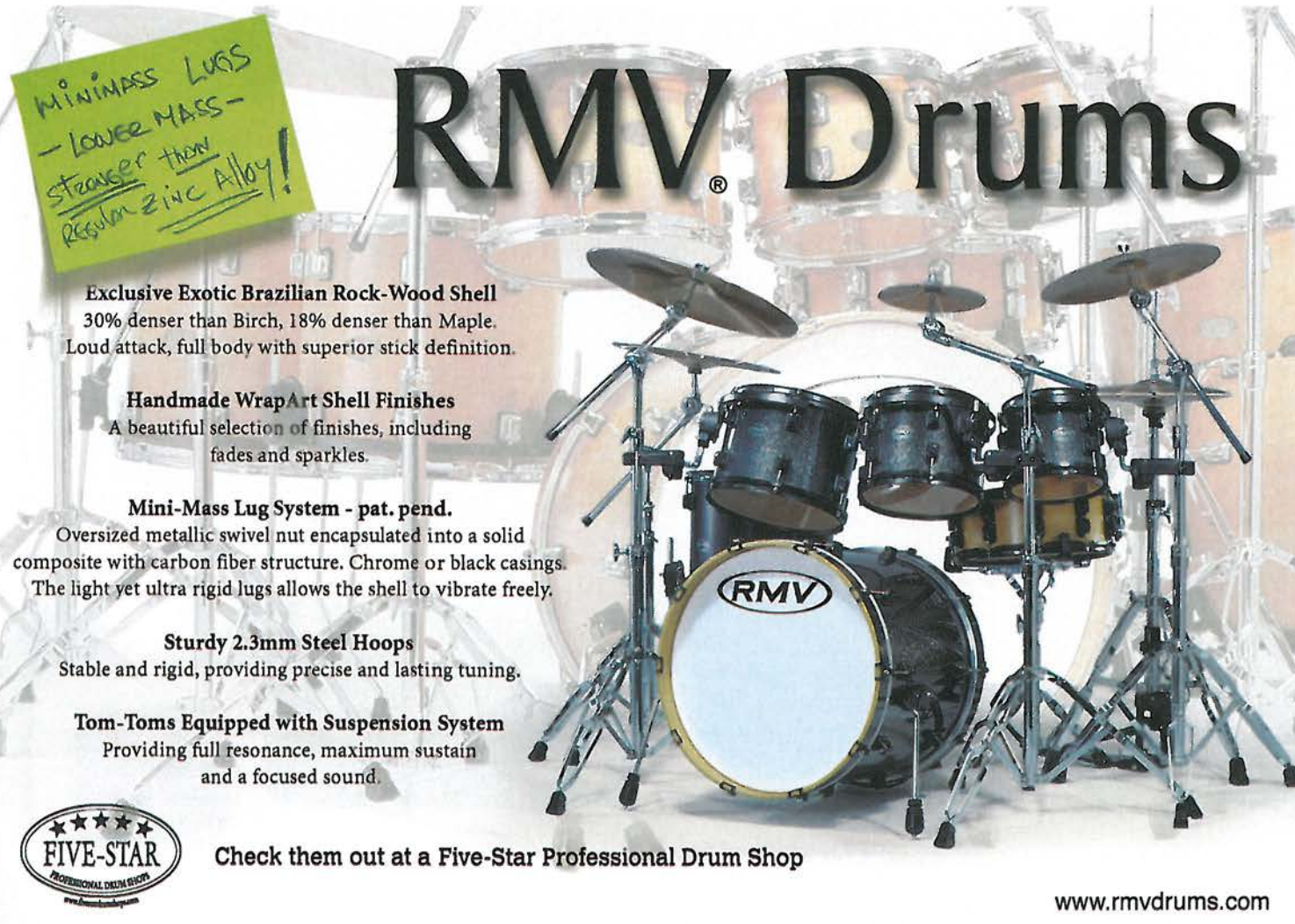
On the first album I did with David, *Black Tie White Noise*, there's a song called "Jump They Say." I was so excited to be recording with David, and my performance on that track shows it in a good way. Plus Nile Rogers was producing, and that was a dream.

The third song I would pick is "Runaway Train," from Soul Asylum's *Grave Dancer's Union.* It was an interesting time for me because from 1987 up to the early '90s, I had been living in Europe. When I came home, the whole landscape of music was changing. Nirvana had kicked in and alternative rock came in. Quite honestly, I didn't know much about the style. I wouldn't call "Runaway Train" an alternative track. It was just a great pop song.

"Something I've learned, which I think a lot of musicians need to think about, is how IMPORTANT it is to not be threatened by new things."

MD: What can we expect from the new Bowie record? What are some of your favorite tracks? What was fun during the process, and what was hard?

Sterling: The hard thing was not recording more. I love recording with David, and it basically goes like this: You walk in the room, he plays the song once or twice, and then you go in and take your shot at it. We then order lunch, watch some British comedy, he tells some stories, and then we go on



to the next song. He really lets you do your thing. We recorded about two songs a day. David is so much fun, and he's always trying different things. The process is almost kid-like—really exciting and fun, with a lot of laughs.

MD: What do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses as a drummer? If you had time to woodshed something, what would it be?

Sterling: Dynamics, rudiments—and I wish I were more coordinated. I'm left-handed on a right-handed kit, which obviously has its pluses and minuses. The pluses are, because I think lefty, sometimes I play some really odd-sounding things.

Growing up, most of the drummers I saw set up right-handed, so I got used to that. People have asked me why I just don't lead with my left hand, but I didn't learn that way. Sometimes I'll do a fill, and when most drummers go around the drumkit, they usually crash with the right hand, but I'll end up crashing with my left.

I think one of my strengths is staying open. Something I've learned, which I think a lot of musicians need to think about, is how important it is to not be threatened by new things. When the '90s came around and the whole drum machine and rap thing kicked in big, I started getting jealous, because that was starting to take the attention away from me. But I wasn't listening to what was really happening. I think that attitude limits a lot of musicians. Music is music and everybody is offering something. I wasted a lot of time criticizing stuff. But you miss out when you criticize something you don't understand.

MD: What have you learned from working with David Bowie?

Sterling: He has a truly unique perspective. He lets things happen. He has an idea and doesn't know how it's going to pan out, but he keeps developing it and eventually it turns into its own thing.

One of the things I really love about David is that his music comes from the core of rock 'n' roll, from people like Buddy Holly and Little Richard. Of course, David finds a unique way of creating something out of it. He has an incredible gift and he's a true artist. David's whole thing is deep, and I want to honor that and help bring it to people.p

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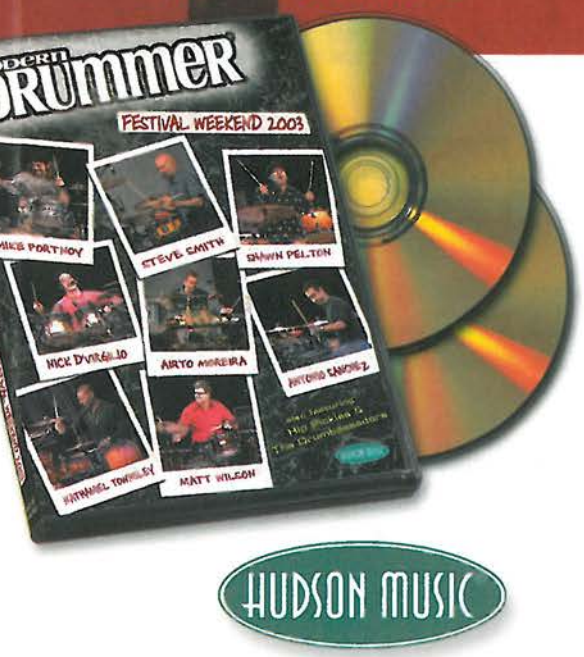

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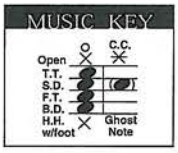
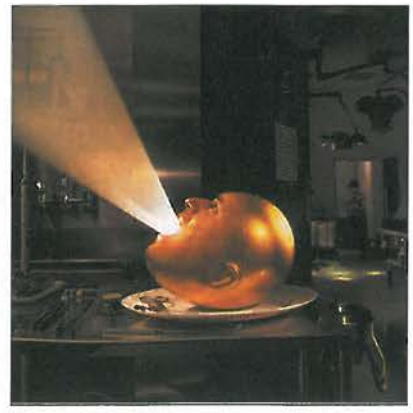
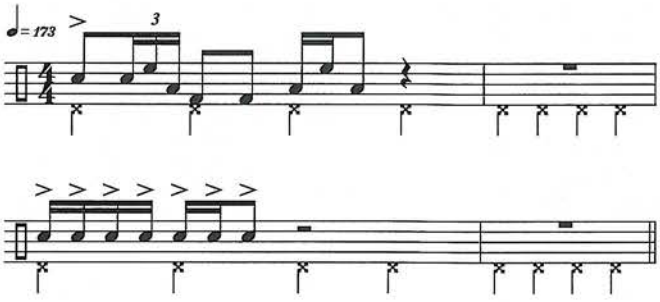
The Mars Volta's
Jon Theodore
De-Loused In The Comatorium

by Ed Breckenfeld

The debut album from The Mars Volta takes prog rock in new directions with high-energy odd time signatures and unusual sonic textures. The band's indefinable blend of punk, jazz-fusion, metal, and Middle Eastern rhythms forms a fertile soundscape for drummer Jon Theodore to explore. And explore he does, with some wonderfully quirky and creative patterns. Here are a few examples.



"Son Et Lumiere"

Jon's entrance on the album comes near the end of this short atmospheric intro piece, and makes an immediate explosive statement.

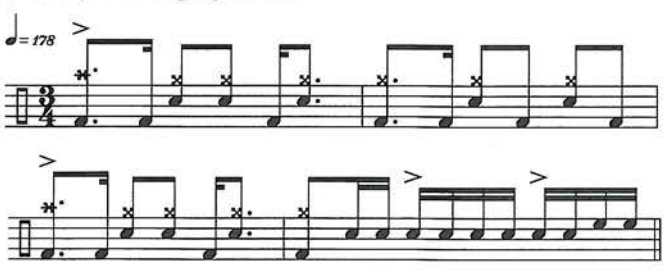


"Inertiatic ESP"

One of rock music's most underused time signatures is 3/4, a situation rectified by The Mars Volta on this album. A four-note guitar riff over the following three-beat groove adds a compelling polyrhythm to the verse of this track.

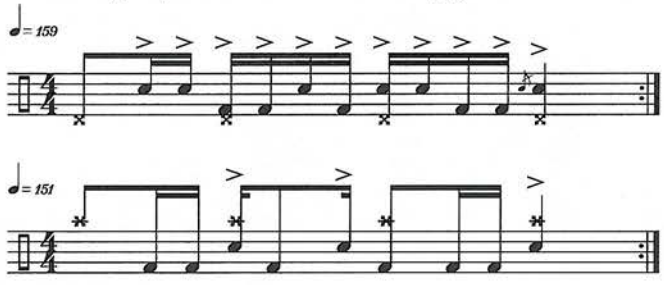
"Roulette Dares (The Haunt Of)"

In this song, Jon creates a cool effect by making his cymbal pattern part of the movement of his drumbeat, rather than just a simple steady timekeeping device.



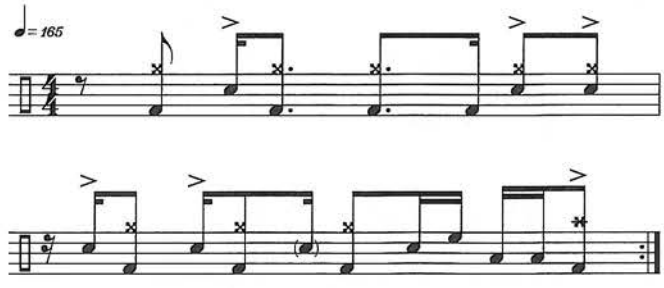
"Drunkship Of Lanterns"

The bridge of this tune contains two different drum patterns based around a staccato guitar riff. Jon mimics the staccato effect in the first figure, then turns it into a flowing groove in the second.

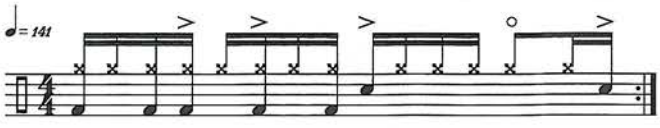


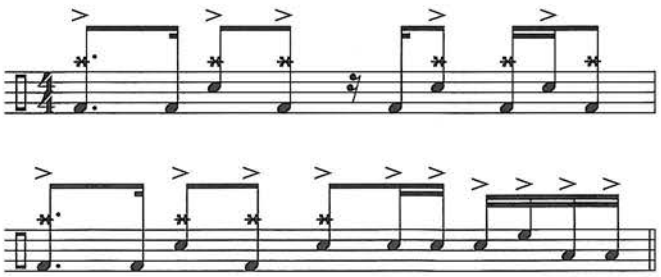
"Eriatarka"

Here's another unusual drumbeat with a moving cymbal pattern. The excitement in Jon's grooves stems from his unique rhythmic approach to high-speed drumming.



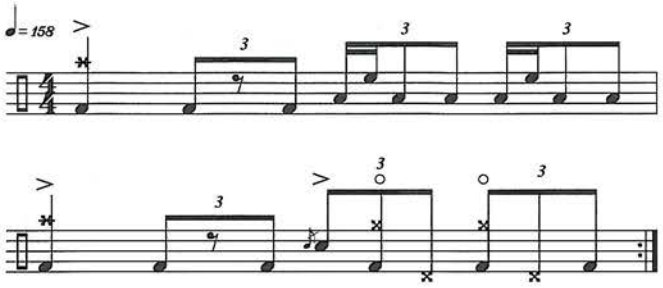
"Cicatriz ESP"

In this two-handed, 16th-note hi-hat beat from the verse of the tune, the bass and snare combination doubles a syncopated bass guitar riff.

Jon's chorus pattern contains some syncopation of its own.

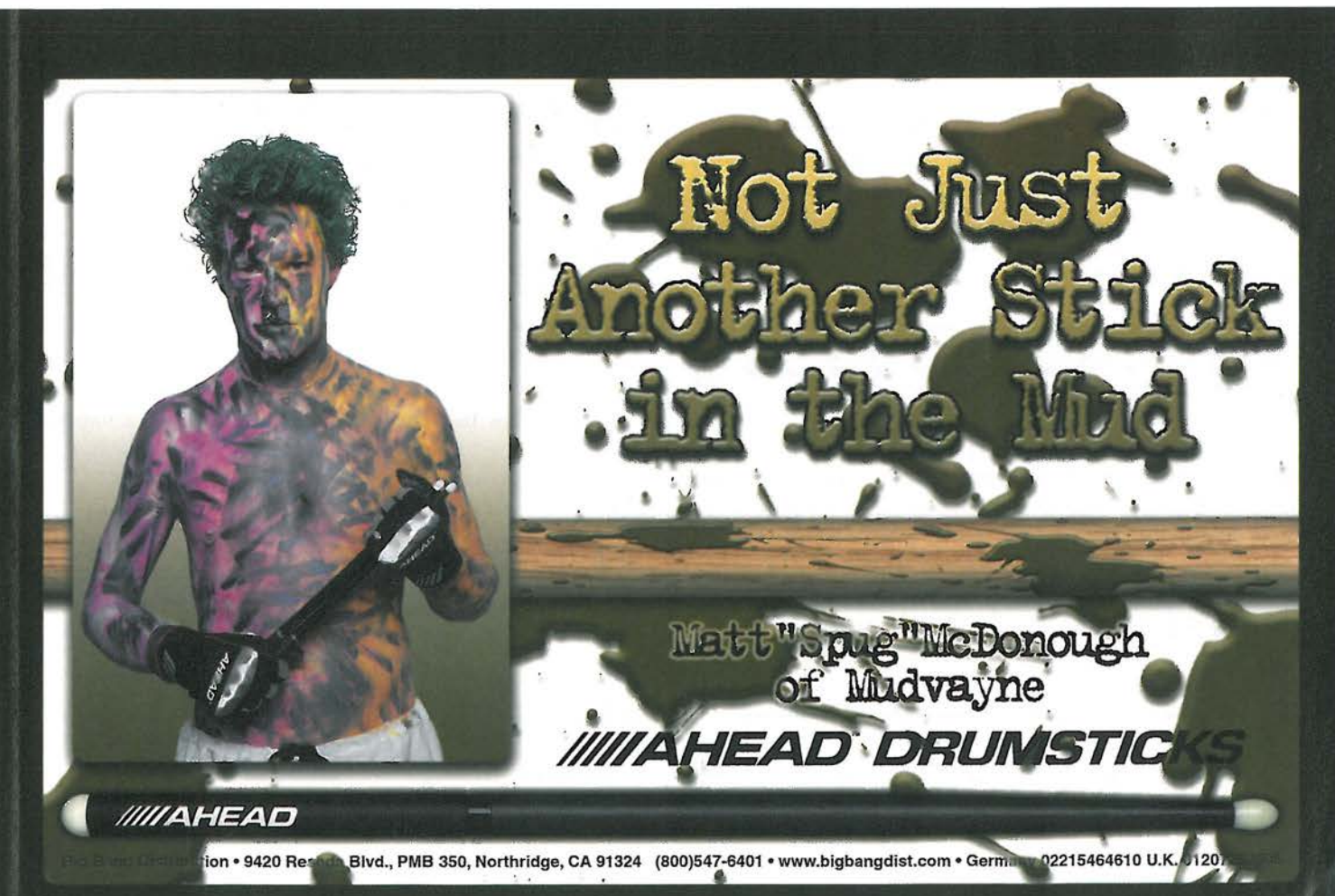


"This Apparatus Must Be Unearthed"

This intro pattern features a nice contrast between a fast tom lick in the first measure and an off-beat open hi-hat sequence in the second.



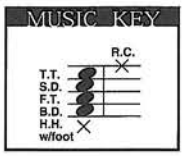
You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site at www.edbreckenfeld.com.



Creative Comping

Groupings Of Five In 4/4

by Christian Finger



Most of our "daily job" as jazz drummers is to play in 4/4, supplying the music with a steady pulse and the soloist with motifs to play off of. These are important parts of jazz drumming, and every master of the craft has found his or her sound and concept for doing it. For instance, compare Elvin Jones' "triplet-ish" comping with that of Philly Joe Jones' or Art Taylor's "slick" approach.

In this article I'd like to introduce you to the fascinating possibilities of putting groupings of five in a 4/4 swing framework. It's a rhythmic device that's used a lot in Indian talas and also in contemporary classical music. You also hear it in the works of Jeff "Tain" Watts, Vinnie Colaiuta, Terry Bozzio, and others.

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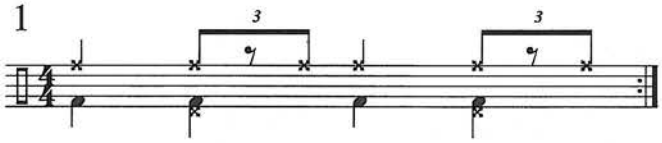
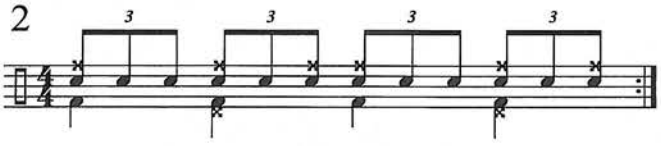
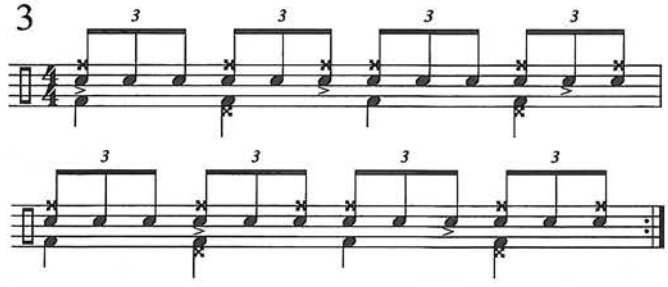
4. Make your time stronger.

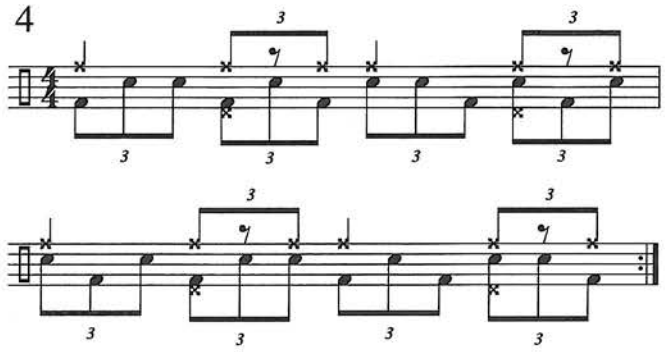
Step 1: Play the standard swing-ride pattern on the cymbal along with quarter notes on the bass drum and 2 and 4 on the hi-hat.

Step 2: Play continuous 8th-note triplets with the left hand along with the previous pattern.



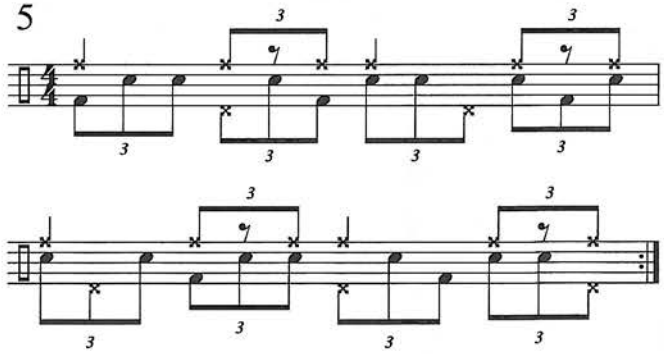
Step 3: Break the 8th-note triplet up in groups of five (in a two-bar pattern) with the help of accents. Play this slowly, and be sure to carefully count "1-trip-let, 2-trip-let, 3-trip-let, 4-trip-let" as you work through the example. Otherwise you might get lost.



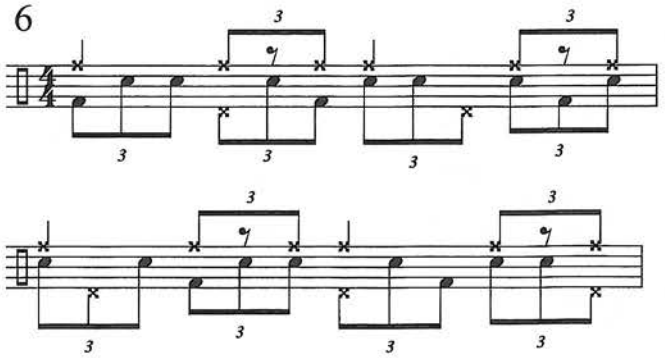
Step 4: Break up the five-note grouping between bass and snare while continuing to play the ride cymbal beat and the hi-hat on 2 and 4. (Notice the way the five-note grouping is broken up in a 3+2 grouping.)

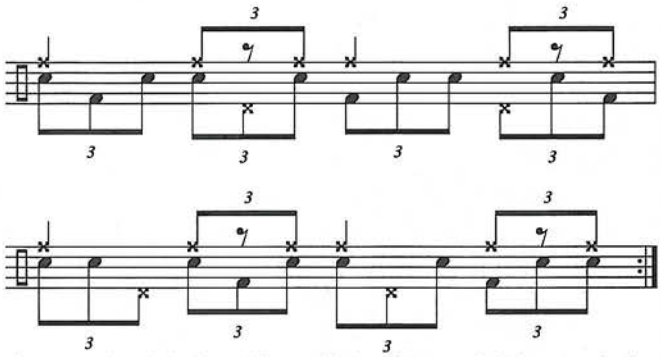


Step 5: Exchange a right-foot bass drum beat with your left foot on the hi-hat.



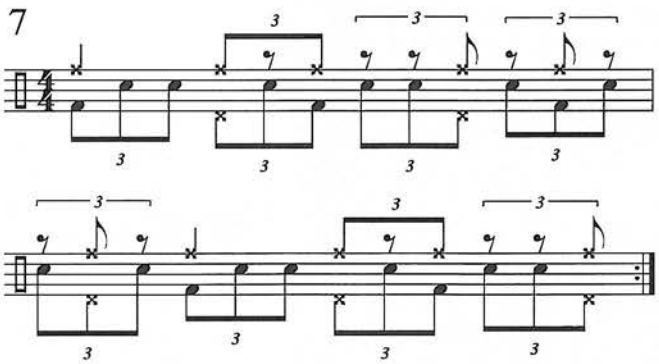
Step 6: Follow the same routine, but expand it to a four-bar phrase.





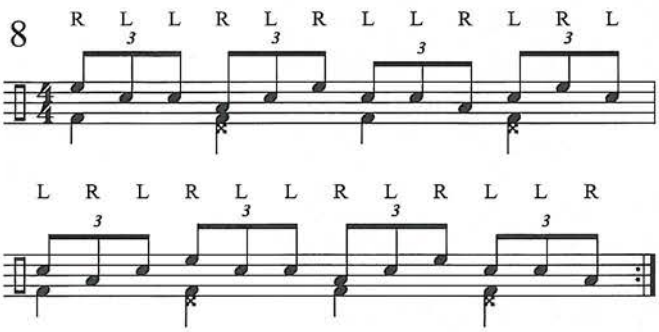
Step 7: The right hand "leaves" the ride cymbal beat and plays in unison with the feet.

Variation for solos and fills: Take the same approach as before,

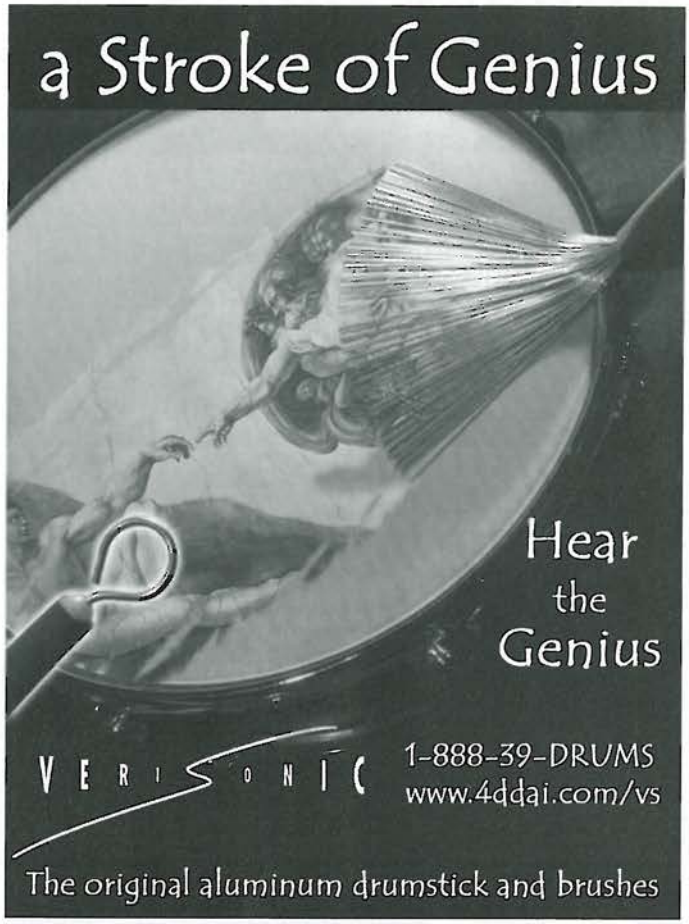


but now apply the five-note grouping to the snare and toms using the sticking RLLRL.

Again, study this material very slowly at first. Break it up in



pieces, and then experiment with it. This kind of approach is so inspiring, chances are you'll come up with some amazing variations of your own. Good luck!



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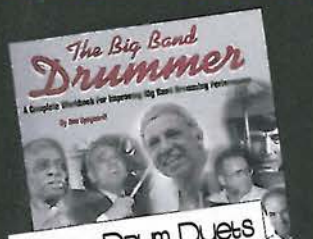

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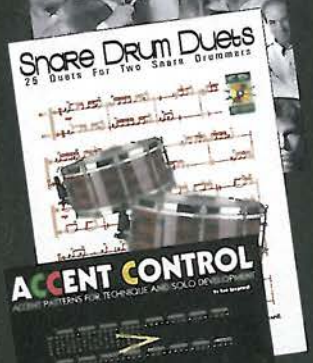
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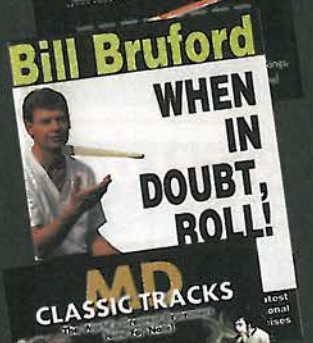

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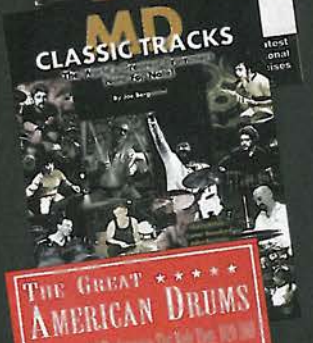

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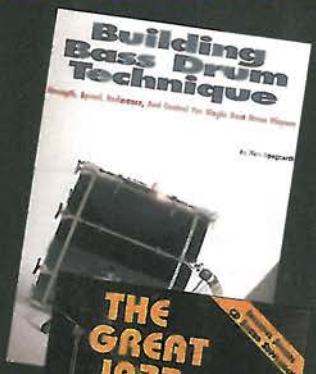

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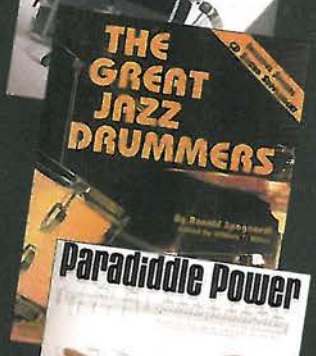

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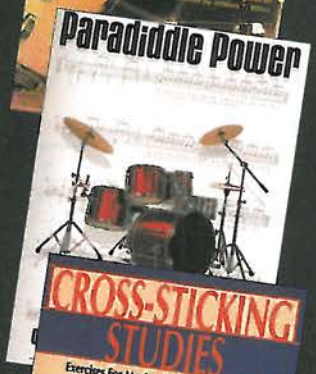

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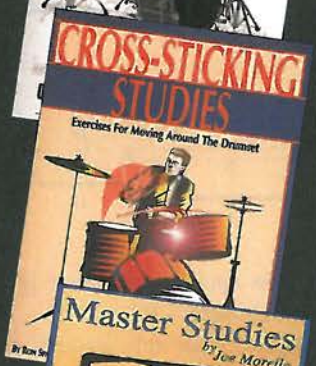

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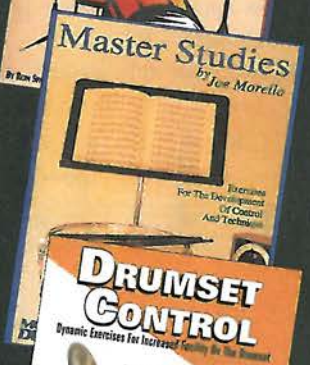

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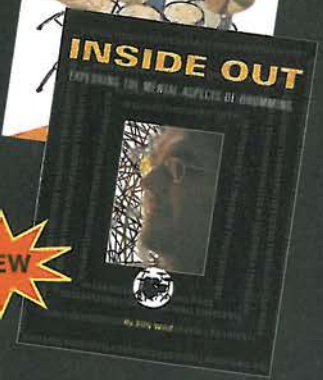

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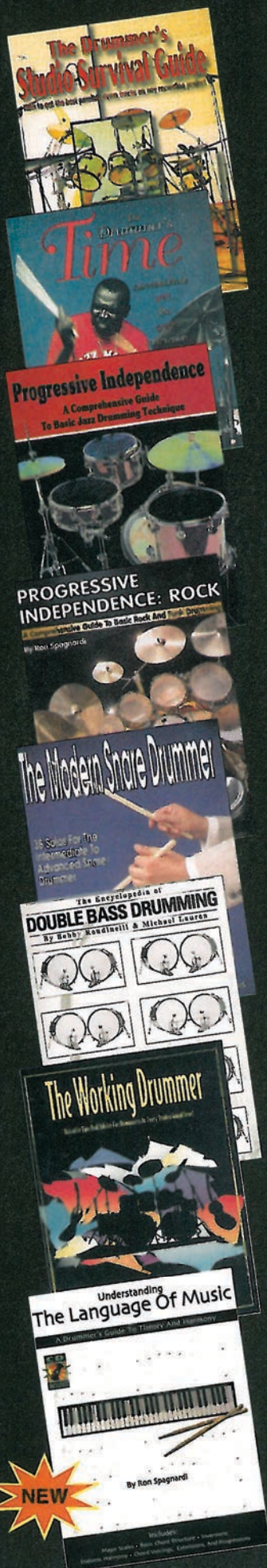

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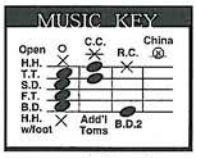
Spock's Beard's
Nick D'Virgilio
"Second Overture"

Transcribed by Joe Bergamini



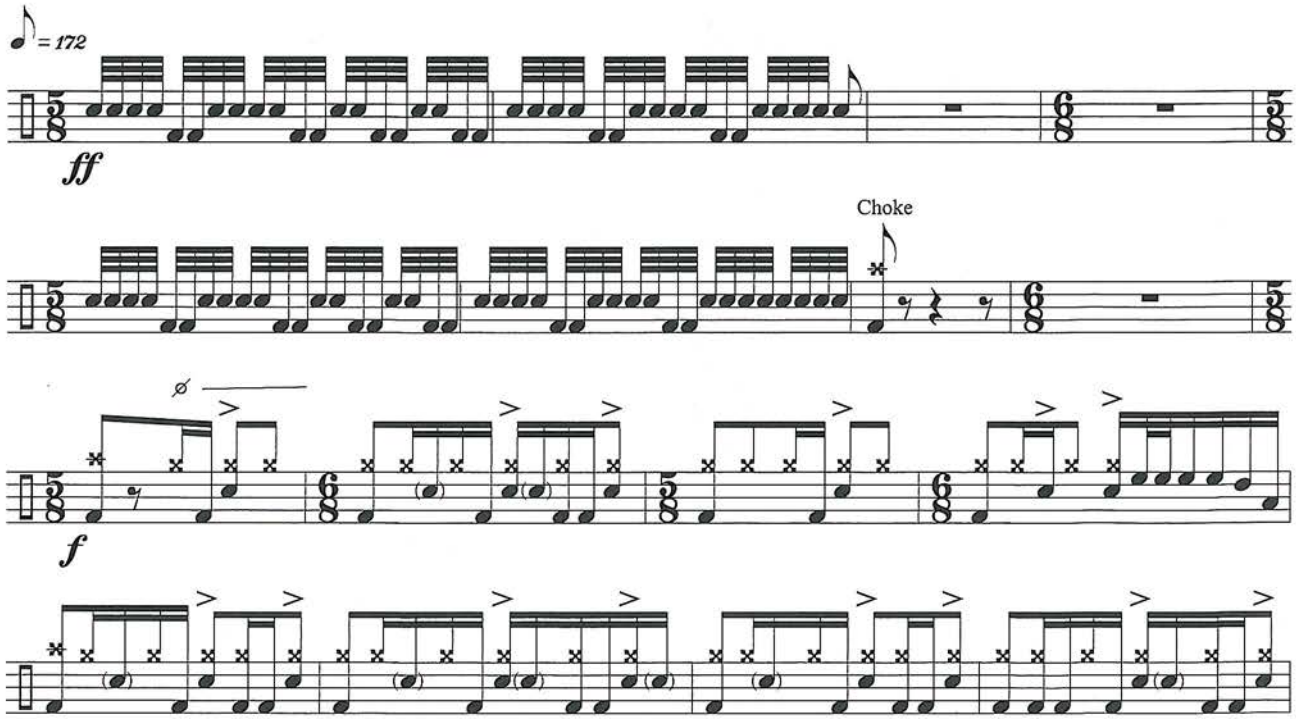
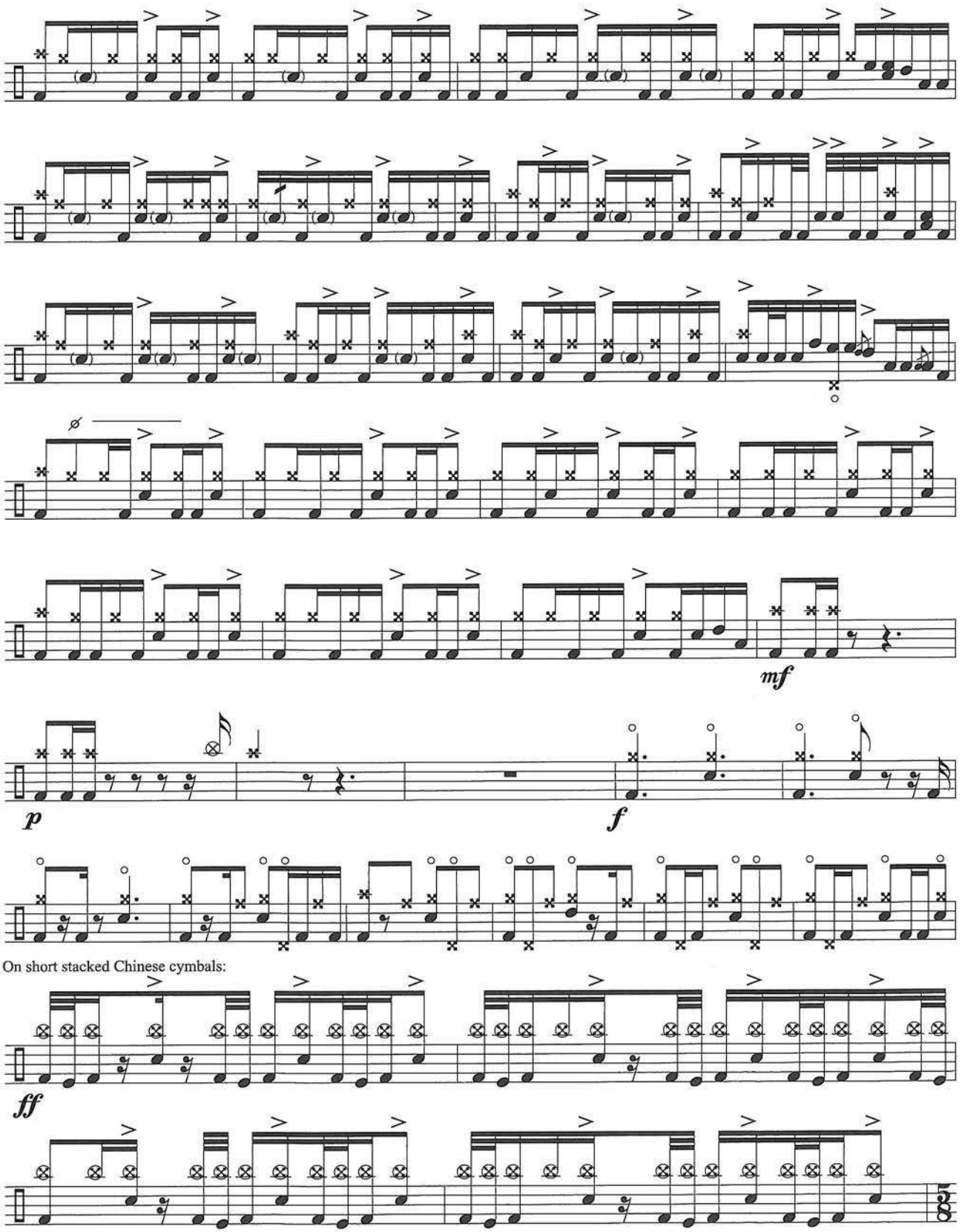
Snow, the 2002 release from prog-rockers Spock's Beard, shows the unbelievable creativity, depth, and versatility of the band on many levels. Spock's combines technical virtuosity with a strong songwriting sense and some of the best vocal harmonies anywhere. The record goes through a variety of moods and styles, staying interesting and tasteful through two CDs.

"Second Overture," which leads off the second disc, foreshadows some musical parts that appear later on the disc. In the tradition of classic Genesis and Yes, the music is technical (and not in 4/4), yet grooves the whole way. This is due in no small part to drummer Nick D'Virgilio's wonderful touch. Listen carefully for the ghost notes throughout the song. They're always tastefully placed and perfectly executed. Nick's playing comes across amazingly well: He plays some very difficult parts here, but makes it all sound smooth and easy.

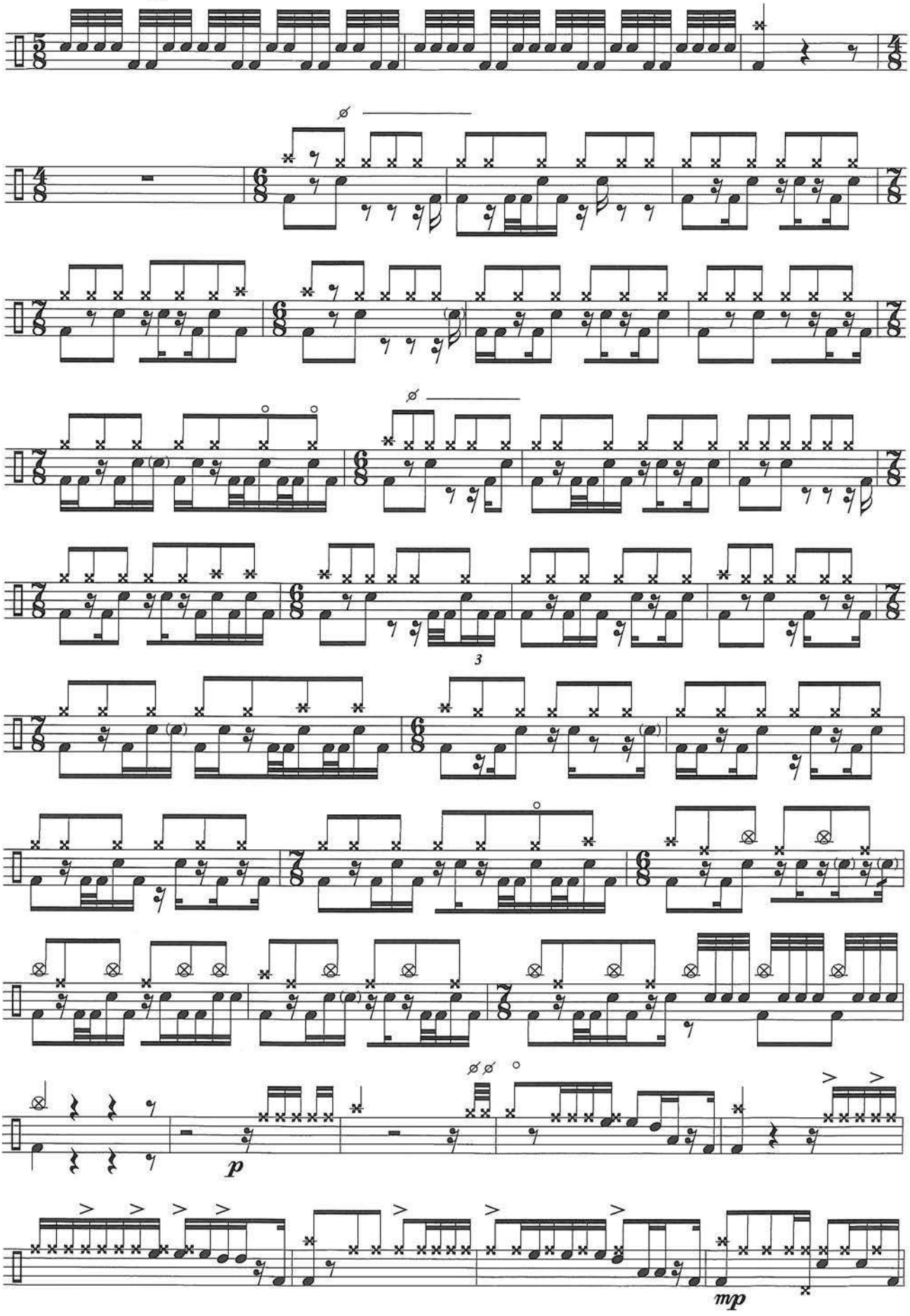
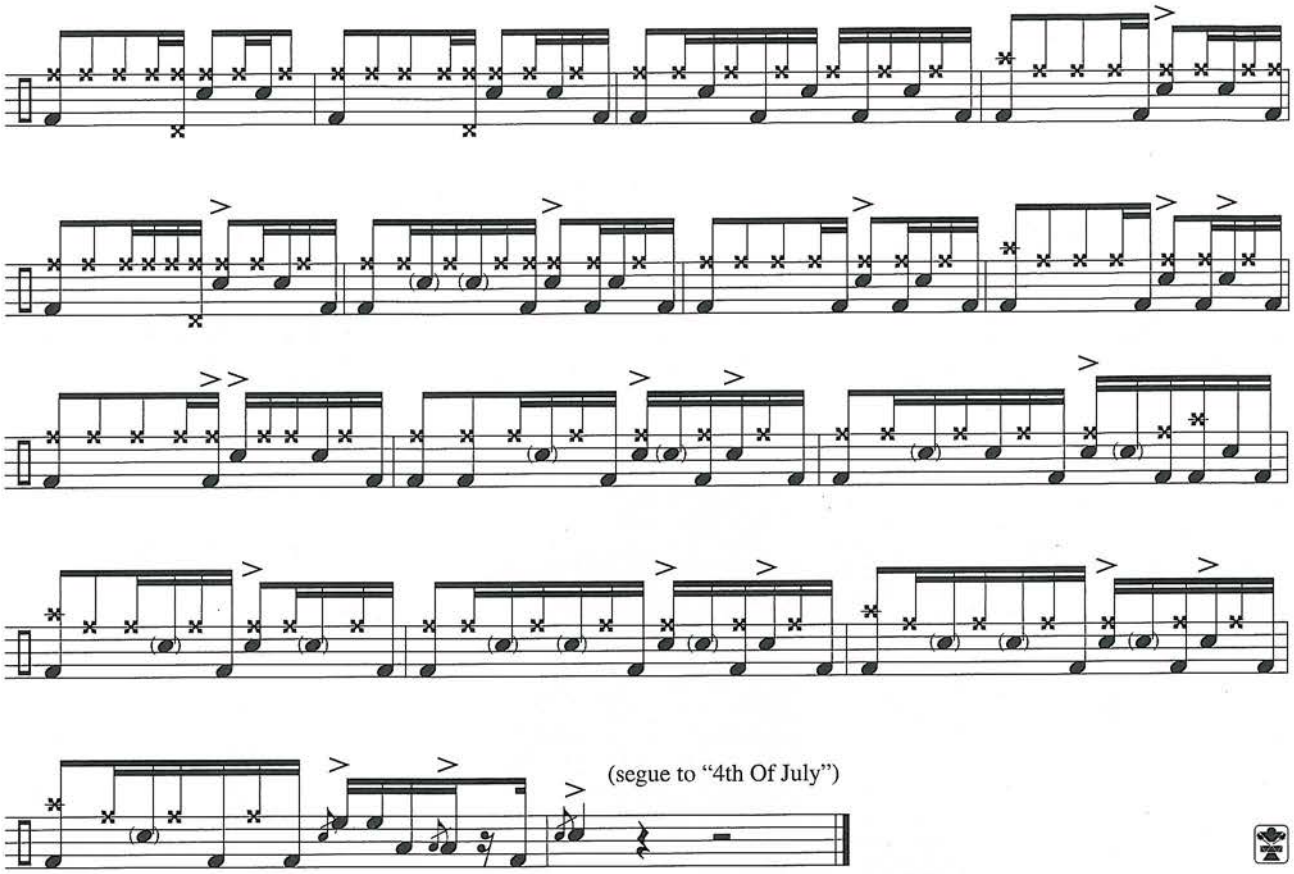
The opening riffs give way to a 6/8 motif in which Nick echoes the melody in his phrasing and fills. Listen to his wide, fat flams in the fills. Following a quiet interlude, Nick erupts into a Mike Portnoy–esque double bass groove complete with stacked Chinese cymbals.

The section following this is a phrase consisting of three bars of 6/8 followed by a bar of 7/8. What's interesting is that the backbeat in the bars of 6/8 occur on beat 3, which is quite unusual. Nick makes it sound smooth and easy. This eventually breaks down into an outtro, which is all in 7/8. Nick's touch and creativity are beautiful in this soft section.

Note: The chart contains separate symbols representing Chinese and stacked Chinese cymbals, as well as the standard "x" for the ride, crashes, and hi-hats.



mf
p
f
On short stacked Chinese cymbals:
ff

Nick D'Virgilio



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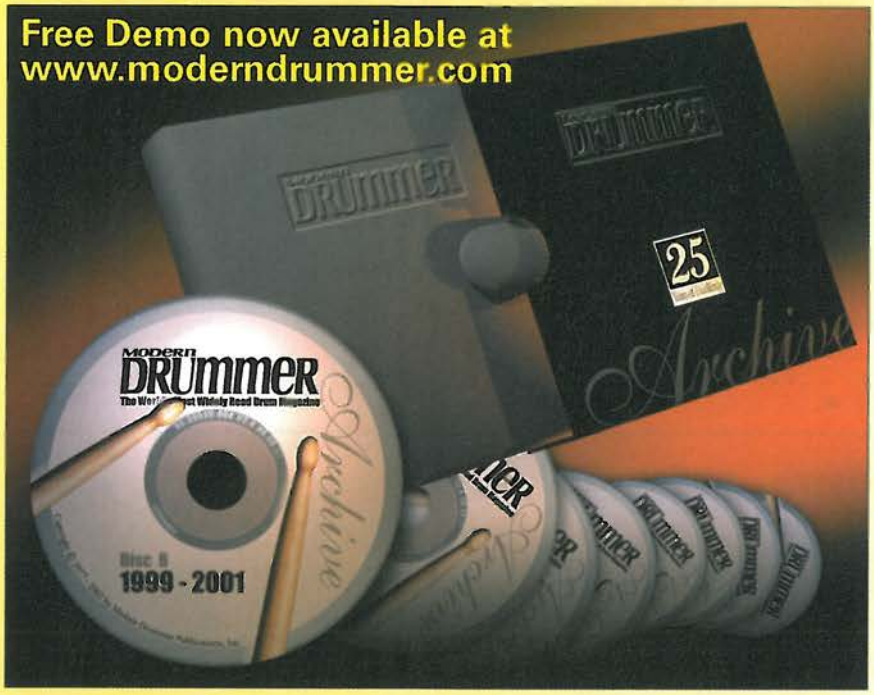

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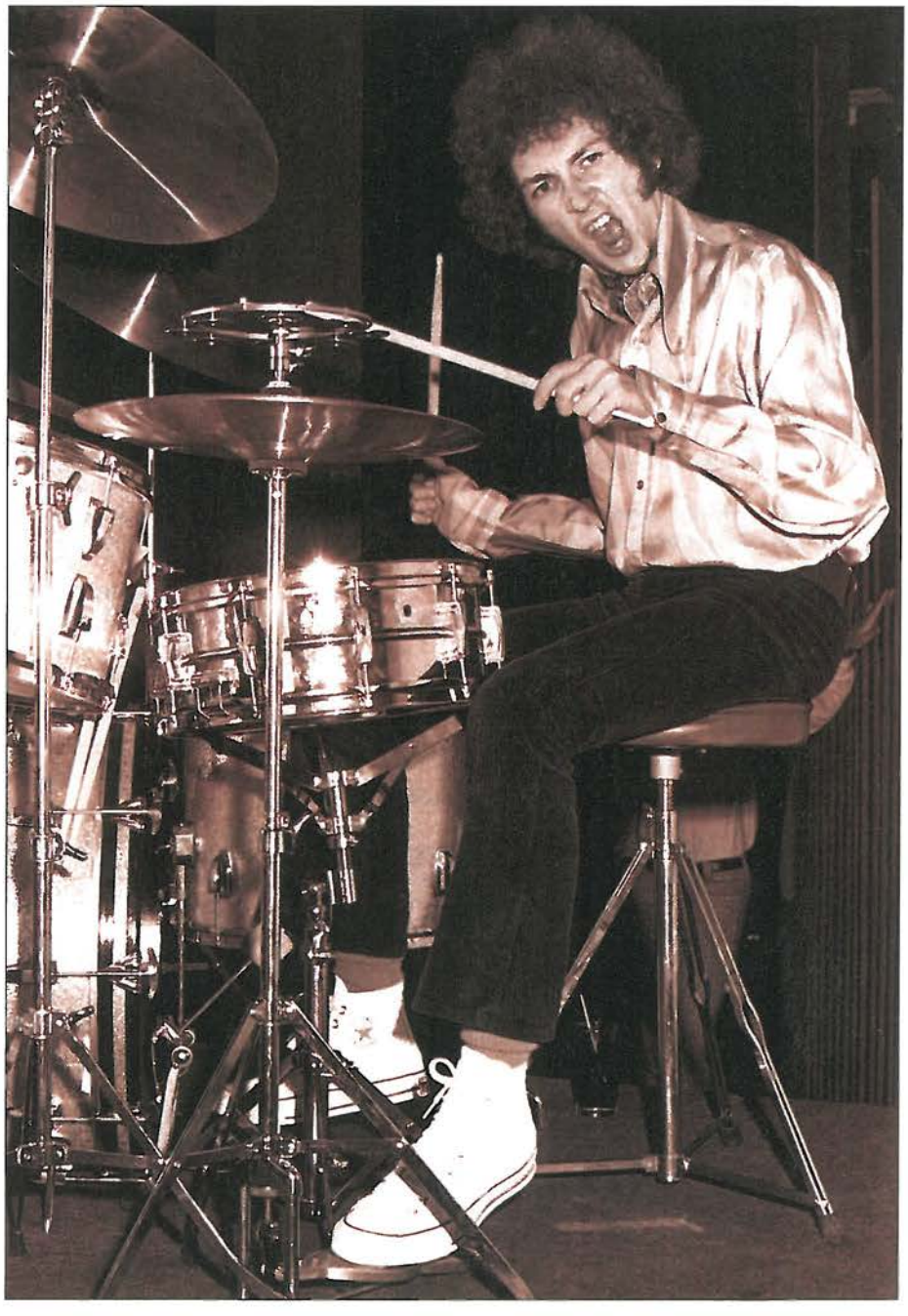
Jimi's Rhythmic Fire

Mitch Mitchell's Top-15 Performances

by Jim Duffy

In the pantheon of '60s rock nobility, few drummers sit higher than Jimi Hendrix's favorite sticksman, Mitch Mitchell. His blend of rock explosiveness, jazz discipline, and fusion experimentation brought a rhythmic drive to the Experience that matched Hendrix's own guitar virtuosity in its unique and complex resonance.

Mitchell quickly rose to icon status among drummers in the late 1960s. His technical brilliance and innovation was evident even to non-musicians.



Mitchell and Hendrix fed off each other's energy and forged a bond on stage and in the studio normally reserved for the drummer and bassist. Not to take away from bassist Noel Redding's integral contribution to the power trio, but the Hendrix-Mitchell connection seemed almost telepathic. When Hendrix soared, Mitchell was always right there as navigator.

Mitchell's stint with the group was as close to happenstance as it gets. The day after his firing from Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames, Mitchell was invited by ex-Animals bassist and producer Chas Chandler to audition for a new group Chandler was forming to support Hendrix. The auditions eventually boiled down to two choices—Mitchell and Aynsley Dunbar. According to Chandler, he and Hendrix literally flipped a coin, with the toss landing in Mitchell's favor. (Dunbar eventually found his own success with Frank Zappa, Journey, and Jefferson Starship.)

From the Experience's earliest gigs and studio work, Hendrix knew he had a true collaborator in the young drummer, who had the flexibility—and the chops—to match the intensity of the guitarist's wild and unpredictable performance style. Mitchell quickly rose to icon status among

drummers in the late 1960s. His technical brilliance and innovation was evident even to non-musicians. The lightning-speed breaks that filled the gaps in Hendrix's vocals and solos quickly became his trademark.

Except for a brief period with drummer Buddy Miles, Hendrix played to Mitchell's beat for each of the four years of his all-too-short solo career. Mitchell's body of studio work with The Jimi Hendrix Experience spans three landmark albums—*Are You Experienced* (1967), *Axis: Bold As Love* (1967), and *Electric Ladyland* (1968)—plus assorted live performances, including his historic Woodstock appearance. Here's the cream of the crop—the *essential* Mitch Mitchell performances.

15. "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" (*Electric Ladyland*) One of Hendrix's heavier riff and jam tunes is driven forward by Mitchell's powerful beat. Keeping to a fairly standard ride cymbal/snare routine through most of the song, Mitch finally cuts loose during Jimi's final solo, showcasing the telepathy between the Experience's guitarist and drummer.

14. "Crosstown Traffic" (*Electric Ladyland*) The dominant percussion feature here is the simple but effective match of the staccato guitar licks that persist throughout the tune. Mitchell's double bass strikes on the verses also add to the urgency of the lyrics. At a mere 2:12, this is one of many Hendrix tunes that seems to wrap too early, a result of producer Chandler's quest to keep Hendrix AM radio-friendly.

13. "Foxey Lady" (*Are You Experienced*) This classic is an excellent example of the Hendrix-Mitchell connection. Listen to how tight the two are as they explode out of silence together after the second chorus. Also listen for Mitchell's characteristic 32nds on the tom near the closing fadeout. The somewhat "hollow" reverberations of his toms was another part of his signature sound with the Experience.

12. "Highway Chile" (*Are You Experienced*) This autobiographical rocker incorporates an interesting switch from skip beat to straight-ahead rock beat at the end of each verse. Besides the usual fast fills throughout, Mitchell lets loose with a scorching series of breaks in the final reprise.

11. "Purple Haze" (*Are You Experienced*) The snare/kick work in the intro of this track is perhaps Mitchell's most identifiable drum pattern. Listen for his 32nds on the snare and toms during the closing fade. Mitchell first heard "Purple Haze" in the studio only minutes before the recording was made. The final version is take three.

10. "Third Stone From The Sun" (*Are You Experienced*) This unusual instrumental switches back and forth from jazz piece to straight-ahead rock anthem, with each change as seamless as the last under Mitchell's guidance. At 2:30, the group diverges into a turbulent freeform jazz exercise, with Hendrix's unique guitar sounds

backed by Mitchell's jazzy cymbal work and Redding's driving bass line. Listen to how Mitch's drum line plays beautifully off Hendrix's guitar and poetic ramblings.

9. "Love Or Confusion" (*Are You Experienced*) Mitchell's usual crisp, speedy breaks are somewhat buried in a guitar-heavy mix. Once again, his jazz influence surfaces as the song switches tracks at the halfway point. Listen for his precise cymbal bell work beginning at 1:28. About thirty seconds later, he leads a beautiful segue back to the original rock tempo.

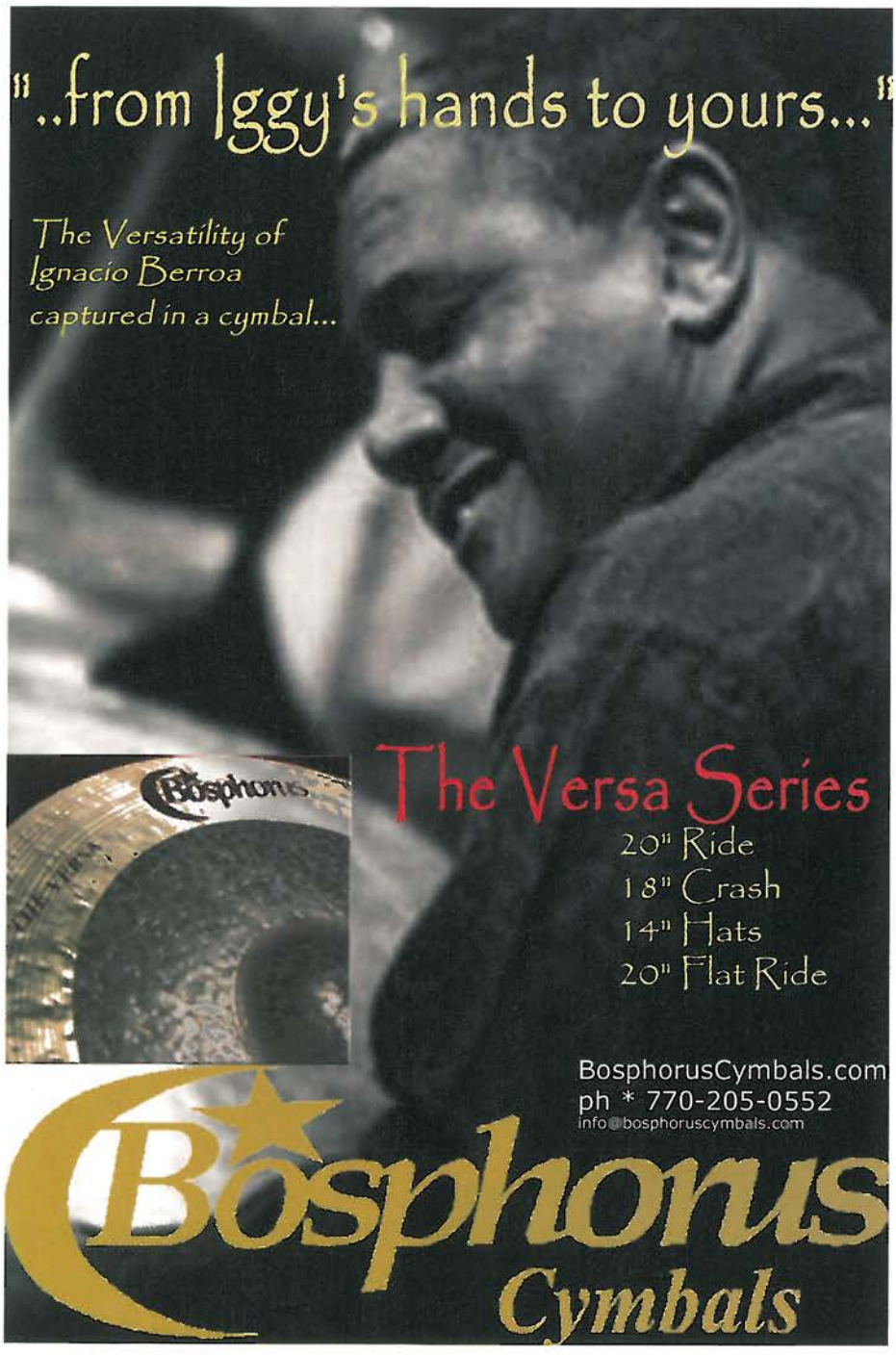
8. "May This Be Love" (*Are You Experienced*) This beautiful tune features a nice calypso-style pattern using toms and snare with the snares switched off. The delicate tom rolls Mitch uses to return to the pattern after the short breaks are exquisitely executed.

7. "I Don't Live Today" (*Are You Experienced*) Mitchell launches this rocker right out of the gate with a simple but effective pattern on the kick drum, snare, and crash cymbal. His switch to double-time for a single measure at the end of each chorus keeps the song on edge, until 2:22, when it breaks into a total free-for-all. The final minute is an amazing example of how Mitchell could play clean and unbridled at the same time. If not for the Hendrix guitar licks layered over the top, the song's close would play as a lengthy, and most impressive, drum solo.

6. "Hey Joe" (*Are You Experienced*) Some of Mitchell's best work appears on this bluesy take on an old standard. His remarkable fills perfectly mirror the tone of each lyric, building to the story's turning point at 1:36 under the lyric "I gave her the gun/I shot her!" The breaks show off Mitchell's tremendous stick control and his innate judgement in the intensity and length of each break. Take special note of the long jazzy fill at 2:10 coming out of the guitar solo.

5. "She's So Fine" (*Axis: Bold As Love*) To me, this tune could be a lost track from The Who. Little in this song is typical of the Experience, especially in the vocals, with Noel Redding singing lead on his only self-penned tune on *Axis*. Not only do Mitchell's drums sound "flatter" than normal, but his playing style uncannily mirrors that of Keith Moon—never a bad thing, but unusual for a drummer with such a distinctive style of his own.

4. "Wait Until Tomorrow" (*Axis: Bold As Love*) Great dynamics are created with Mitchell's simple rimclicks accented by the thunderous breaks after each chorus. The tom/kick break at 2:38 is the best on the track, just before yet another early fade. Mitchell's work during this fade hints at



even better breaks to come. But, alas, they remain unheard, as Chandler again forced a wrap before that magic three-minute barrier of '60s radio.

3. "If 6 Was 9" (*Axis: Bold As Love*) This track starts with another innovative Mitchell pattern—a simple double bass strike, followed by a four-count on an open hi-hat. But the song takes some unexpected twists into the jazz-fusion genre, especially effective after Jimi's "white collar conservative" line, where Mitchell's drumming and Redding's hot bass line work so well together. The breakneck rolls beginning at 3:00 showcase Mitchell's speed and stick control.

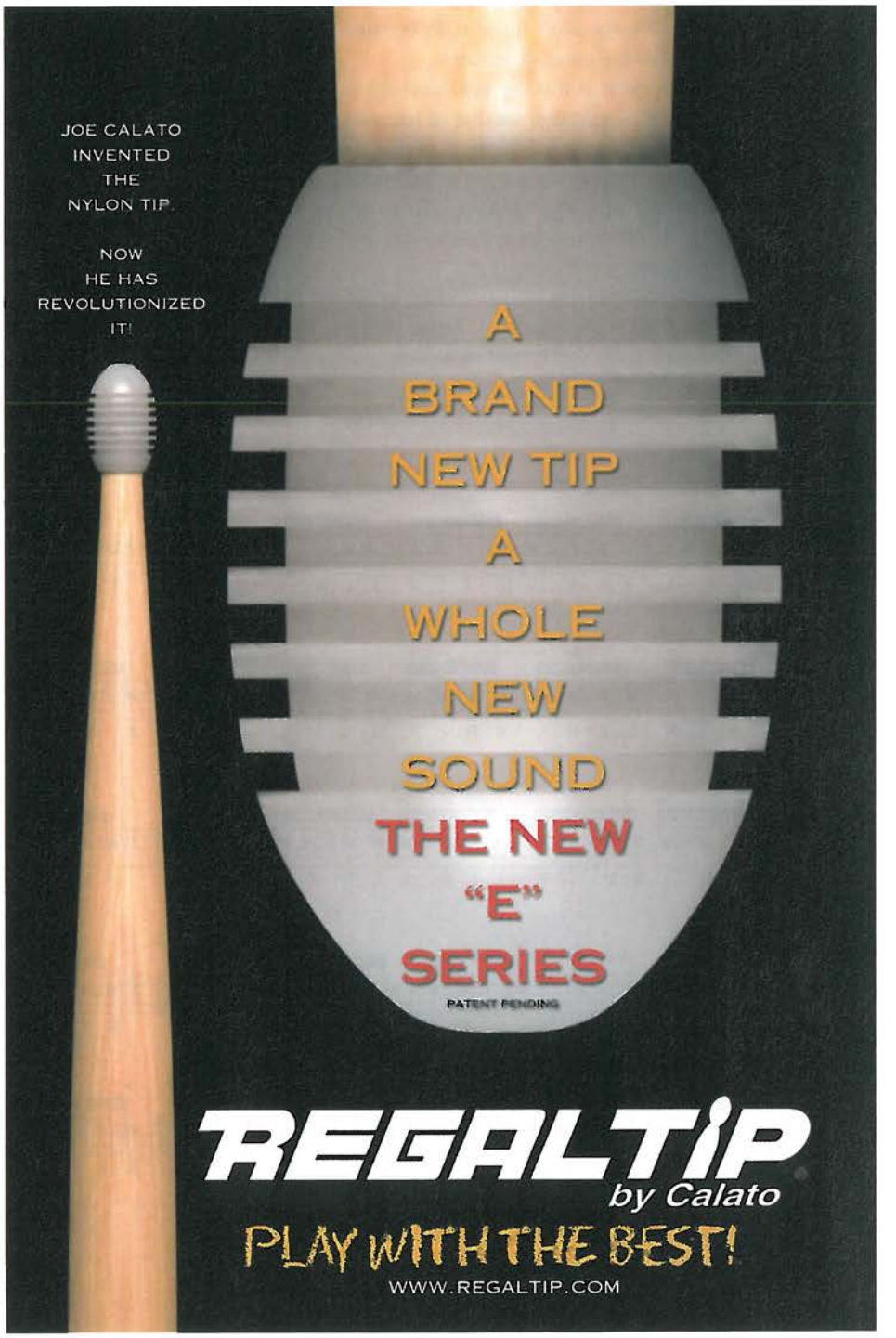
2. "Manic Depression" (*Are You Experienced*) The best way to describe this track is "a psychedelic waltz." This outstanding tune features one of the most unusual time patterns on any rock recording, using a quick double strike on the tom as the timekeeper. The breaks at each chorus keep the song exciting, never monotonous. The build to the climax after the last chorus features some of Mitchell's best work ever, combining triplets with his characteristically fast jazz breaks.

1. "Fire" (*Are You Experienced*) Was there ever any doubt as to the top Mitch Mitchell performance? Many familiar with the Experience's work cite this as the ultimate Hendrix drumming tune. Some feel it's the ultimate rock drumming tune *period.*

In the late '60s, the quest of every cover-band drummer was to learn all the breaks in "Fire." Few could pull it off. Hendrix gave Mitchell room to breathe on this one, developing the perfect interplay of guitar and drums. Mitchell is clearly in the driver's seat, as he maneuvers deftly through this high-performance course—never too busy, never missing a stroke.

Mitchell's live performance of this song was always a thrill to behold. His live-in-the-studio take on the *BBC Sessions* CD has a bit more speed and intensity, but the variety of fills and the clarity of the *Are You Experienced* version make it arguably the top Mitch Mitchell track of all time.

The three studio Experience albums are must-haves for any rock drummer. They inspire the listener with percussive performances that are as fresh and exciting today as they were during the smoke-filled sophomore years of acid rock.



Grooving Flams

Drumming's Tongue Twisters

by Chet Doboe

Flams, flams, flams. Yes, flams can drive us drummers batty! It's a rudiment that seems so easy, and yet so difficult at times. And certainly, the real challenge with flams is to become fluent with incorporating them into the creative process.

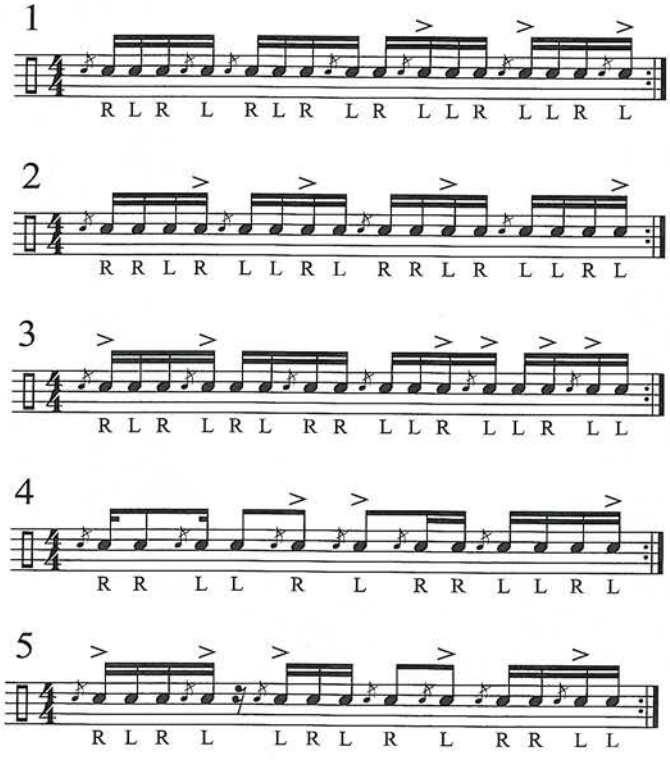
It's no easy task to excel at mixing and matching flam patterns, which can often be our drumming version of tongue twisters. But the mission with flams is so much more than this technical challenge. Flams give us a creative choice for adding texture and color to our rhythmic stories. It's about making music. It just so happens that inserting flams into your creations can make performance way more difficult.

The following ten flam patterns are some of my personal favorites. I love the way each feels and grooves. Some of these might be "tongue twisters" at first. Go slowly, and make these patterns *groove*.

Incidentally, you may find it helpful to perform each pattern minus flams (playing all flams as accents). This will allow you to better key-in on the main storyline of the pattern, and will also allow you to digest what the flams contribute to each example.

By the way, these patterns can easily be applied to the drumkit. Some things to try: 1) Perform all of the flam patterns over the following bass drum patterns: quarter notes, half notes, and 2 and 4. 2) "Voice" your right hand on the hi-hat, and again apply the above kick patterns. 3) Move your right hand around the toms, leaving the left on the snare.

Chet Doboe is an acknowledged master of rudimental drumming. He leads the successful percussion group Hip Pickles.



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Simple Gig Tips

Making Your Performing Life Easier

by Donn Deniston

One of the best things about the drumming community is our willingness to share ideas with one another. Hopefully, the following tips I've managed to acquire over the years as a jobbing drummer will be helpful in making your playing experience more enjoyable and less stressful.

Invest In Cases

Drums are not cheap. If you're going to spend thousands of dollars on a drumset, doesn't it make sense to budget for a decent set of cases to protect your investment? Your drums will last longer, look better, and be easier to transport.

Being a drummer can be a labor-intensive, time-consuming, and thankless profession. So why be miserable doing it?

For security reasons, you might want to consider buying something other than the traditional black variety. My cymbals are cased in a bright red, molded plastic case. The case is very durable, and the bright color makes it easy for me to spot should someone decide to walk off with my cymbals in a dark club.

Spare Parts

In a pinch, you can get through almost any gig with a bass drum, a snare drum, and a hi-hat. Some people even suggest doing just that in order to help focus your playing. To ensure that you'll always have at least those essential items at your disposal, it's a good idea to carry a spare bass drum head, snare drum, and bass drum pedal.

If you don't have a spare snare drum, carry an extra top and bottom head. One of the tools I carry is a manual hand drill with a drumkey end in the chuck. I can swap a batter head on a snare drum in less than a minute with this tool. It looks like an old-fashioned eggbeater, and can be found at any hardware or home supply store. A cordless electric hand drill is an excellent alternative, as long as you make sure the batteries are charged.

A spare bass drum pedal need not be a duplicate of your primary one. It can be an older model that you've since replaced, or a less-expensive newer one. The idea is to have something you can swap very quickly in an emergency, giving you a pedal to play until you can repair your main one. To that end, you should also carry spares for the parts most likely to break on that main pedal. (See the next section.)

Essential Tools

There seems to be a direct correlation between the distance you are from home and the likelihood of something breaking. So, put together a small toolbox with some basic tools and a handful of parts, and you'll survive any emergency.

I recommend carrying drumkeys, screwdrivers, and Allen wrenches to fit any of the screws on your drums and hardware. A pair of regular pliers, a set of adjustable locking pliers, an adjustable open-end wrench, a small flashlight, and a multi-tool of some sort are also good to have. And don't forget pedal springs and connecting straps or chains, an extra beater, a hi-hat clutch, cymbal felts, wing nuts, duct tape, and any other critical items that are prone to breaking or getting lost.

Extra Extra Sticks

It goes without saying that you should bring plenty of sticks to your gigs, and this is why drummers carry stick bags. But I still keep an "extra extra" pair of sticks underneath the seat in my truck, and another pair tucked away in my toolbox. I've never left my stick bag behind, so this is

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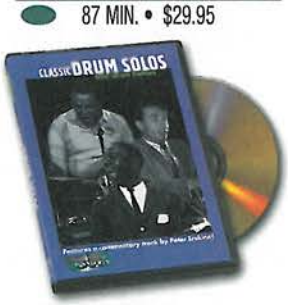

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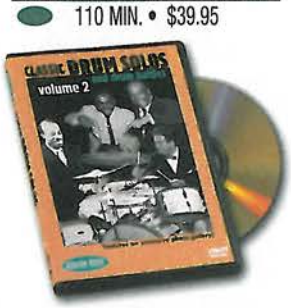

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more of a "better safe than sorry" routine for me. But my vehicular spares have come in handy when I've been invited to sit in with a band unexpectedly and didn't want to risk breaking the other drummer's sticks.

Carry A Rug

Anyone who's tried to play on a smooth, hard floor knows that a rug is indispensable. No one likes to chase after a bass drum all night, and some venues get touchy about grease stains from pedals on new carpeting. A small rug can make life a lot easier.

I prefer a rubber-backed carpet with a very low pile. The backing won't slide on polished floors, and the low pile gives a firm grip on hook-and-loop fastener material without absorbing too much sound from the drums.

If this sounds like the rugs you see at the entrances of many schools and stores, you're right. The best way to get one is to call a local linen supply house and ask if you can purchase any rugs scheduled for the trash. I have two that I bought for ten dollars each many years ago, and they still work perfectly. There are also some excellent rugs and mats on the market that are specifically made for drumkits. Check with your local drumshop about those.

Mark Your Stands

Sometimes you'll have to set up your drums in a hurry—quite possibly in the dark. If you have your stands memorized and labeled, this process is a lot less hectic.

Some hardware includes memory clamps that enable you to lock in your settings. If your hardware doesn't have clamps, regular hose clamps are an effective and inexpensive option. Hose clamps come in various sizes and can be purchased at your local hardware store. Simply install a clamp on any tube you want to memorize. Once the stand is set, tighten the clamp, line up the barrel with the tightening screw on the stand, and you'll have the same setting

Getting Through The Tough Gigs

The music sounds okay, and the bandmembers aren't complaining. But you're still playing with teeth clenched, grinding your way through the gig like you were mowing a lawn. You gasp with relief on the last tune, and you pack up faster than the fiddle player.

We all have preferred musical genres that best suit our playing styles and personal preferences. But how do you overcome the psychological aspects of playing material that you have neither the time nor the inclination to master? Here are a few thoughts.

Appreciate New Experiences

Try to find the uniqueness within the style that makes it different from your favorite music. If you look hard enough, you can tune in to the imagination and originality of the songwriter's efforts. Ask yourself, "Are there any interesting figures or accents to watch out for?" Remember, just as your parents scoffed at some of your musical choices, you may be rushing to judgement. Try to stay open-minded.

Draw Energy From The Audience

A crowd's response is an endless source of inspiration, whatever the musical setting. Tap into this by paying more attention to the dancers, and to the appreciation bestowed on you for performing their favorite music. Remember that you've been hired to entertain an audience, not yourself.

Be Professional

No matter how bad you perceive things to be, always strive to conduct yourself in a manner befitting a professional. The musical community is a small one, and your attitude and behavior often count for more than your musical prowess. Never feel that you're above a musical situation once you've committed to playing in it.

The limits of your patience and your ability to adapt will be challenged throughout your musical career. But how you react to these situations is often what determines your level of success and happiness. The victory of joy over frustration is a battle won in your own mind.

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every time. Don't forget to install a clamp to memorize the height of leg openings as well.

Since the clamps require that you disassemble the hardware, you'll need to know which pieces go together. Once you have all the clamps in place and tightened, wrap a piece of white plastic tape around each section of the stand, and use a permanent marker to label each section with a number. When you get to the gig, match up the markings, line up the clamps, and you're ready to go.

The Stage Bag

I carry a small, brightly colored duffel bag with me, which I keep on stage behind my drums. The bag contains valuables like money, wallet, and keys, along with a spare shirt, a towel, toiletries, paper, pens, and other personal items. I just feel better knowing where these items are at all times.

Water And Fan

The physical nature of our instrument, along with hot stage lights and poorly ventilated venues, increases our bodies' need for water. I've received a few too many glasses of oddly colored water from the bar in the past, so I always take a couple of bottles with me. I keep a sports bottle within reach so I can take a quick sip between tunes. The sipper lid keeps flying wood chips out of my water.

If you play in a lot of hot, smoky clubs, carry a small floor or clip-on fan with you. A fan will keep you relatively cool, and the circulating air helps you tolerate the smoke a little better.

Enjoy Yourself

If you aren't enjoying yourself when you're playing drums, then a serious rethink is in order. Being a drummer can be a labor-intensive, time-consuming, and thankless hobby or profession. So why be miserable doing it? (See the "Getting Through The Tough Gigs" sidebar.)

Any musician can fall into an occasional rut where he or she just gets sick and tired of playing. For some, this may be a sign to hang it up and try something new. Whenever I feel myself slipping into that murky area, I do a few mental gymnastics to recharge my batteries.

First, I try to remember all the things that inspired me to play in the first place. Revisiting an old album I used to practice to, looking over some old photos, or leafing through a copy of an old drum catalog I kept under my pillow as a kid will often generate enough fond memories to energize me again. If that doesn't work, I think back to the few times when I wasn't playing at all, and recall how miserable I was at not having access to my drums.

Finally, I spend time cleaning my kit and trying different setups. Sometimes just handling my drums while admiring the craftsmanship that went into turning all that wood, metal, and plastic into an instrument is enough to do it. A few hours spent re-examining my setup—and maybe adding or taking away a few items—will almost always inspire me to learn a few new things.

The ability to play drums is a gift. What you do with that gift is up to you. The value of the gift is not in the gigs you get, or the money you earn. It's in the way in which music and drumming enriches your life, makes you a better person, and offers you a place to go when the rest of your life gets crazy.

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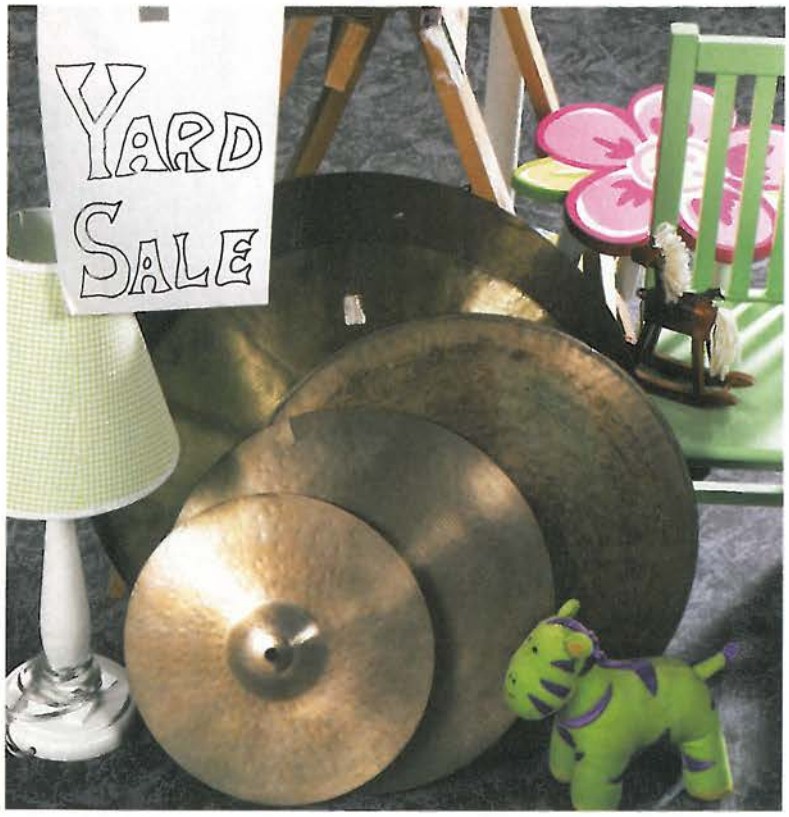
Buying Used Cymbals

by Chris Lee

The first set of drums I ever owned was a set of 1960s Ludwigs that came with an old 22" Zildjian ride, a 16" Zildjian crash, and an 18" Paiste crash. The 22" ride has stood the test of time, and I still use it to this day. But the two crash cymbals only lasted about three years. A piece of the Paiste broke off one day during a garage jam session, and the Zildjian developed a small crack that just got bigger and bigger until finally it let go.



So when I was seventeen and got a part-time job, I cashed my first paycheck and headed straight for the music store to replenish my cymbal arsenal. I walked up to the cymbal trees with drumstick in hand—and immediately encountered a snag. A salesman (who probably was not a drummer) appeared and told me that only serious buyers were allowed to hit the cymbals. After a great deal of difficulty, I was finally able to convince him that I might be planning to buy a new cymbal or two at that exact moment.

I then proceeded to hit virtually every crash cymbal they had...twice. I wasn't sure what sound I was looking for, but I was sure I'd know it when I heard it. Sure enough, after hitting about fifty cymbals, I finally found it: a used medium crash from the '70s. True, this cymbal was much less expensive than the newer models. But price really had nothing to do with it. The aged cymbal had the sound I liked best. I still have that cymbal.

Advantages And Disadvantages

Since that experience so long ago, I've rarely bought new cymbals. My ear has always been inclined toward cymbals that have been mellowed by a few thousand beatings of a drumstick and the passing of years. To date I haven't found a company that can copy this process by artificial means. Besides, while it still isn't my primary concern, the fact that used cymbals are typically 60% to 70% cheaper than new cymbals (particularly when you find them in stores that don't specialize in drums) is an undeniable advantage.

Another advantage is that salespeople are typically not as protective of used cymbals as they are of new ones. I've even heard of some store owners allowing a potential buyer to borrow a used cymbal for a few days, just to be sure that he or she really wants it. Such a thing would be completely unheard of with a brand-new cymbal.

So buying used cymbals has distinct advantages. However, there are also some disadvantages that you must take into consideration. One important such disadvantage is that they will have no warranty whatsoever. With this in mind, there are a few things to look for to ensure that you get your money's worth.

Tell-Tale Signs

The first things to look for are small hairline cracks. (This could very well be the reason why this cymbal ended up on the sales rack.) The best way I've found to look for cracks is to take the cymbal off of the rack and hold it up to the light. Rotate the cymbal very slowly, and carefully examine the grooves for any hint of light shinning

through. If the lights in the store are too dim, ask if you can take the cymbal outside and hold it up to the sun.

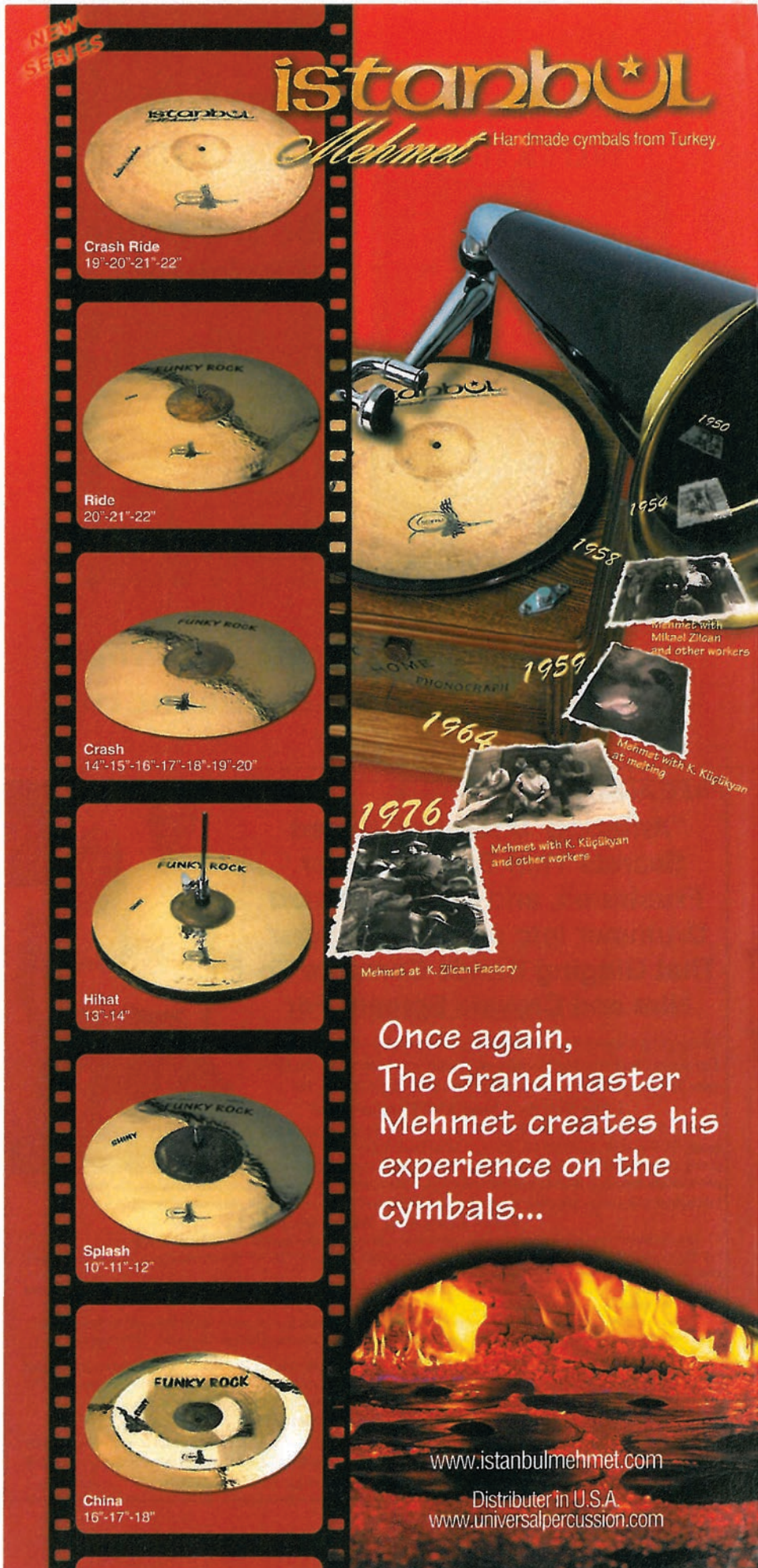
The bell of the cymbal is another place where small cracks can occur. I've typically found these cracks in ride cymbals, since many drummers like the heavy, piercing sound that can be attained by hitting close to the bell—often with the butt of a stick. Some cymbals can withstand this kind of playing, and some can't. In my opinion, a crack in the bell is just as bad as a crack in the groove.

If you find a crack in a cymbal, then that cymbal is not going to be worth more than a few dollars, no matter what it is or who made it. Still, cracked cymbals do have their uses. For example, they make good practice cymbals. You can also swap your good cymbals for a few cracked ones if another drummer is going to borrow your drums for a set. I myself have used a cracked Zildjian K for several years, and ironically, it has been the crash cymbal that my various bandmates have liked the best.

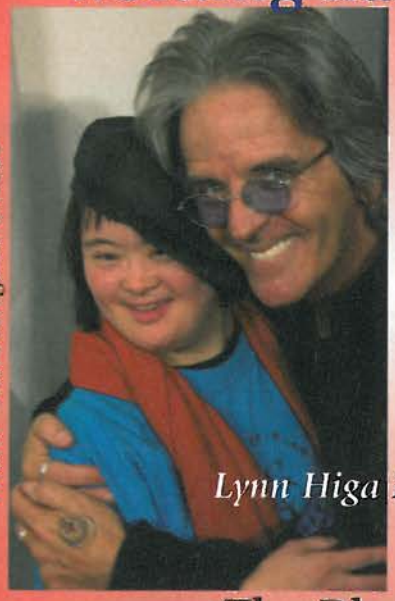
The next thing you should look for is any small dings in the edge of the cymbal. Such dings are not as bad as a crack, but they can *become* a crack over the course of time, depending on your style of playing and how often you hit the cymbal. If it's a crash or an inverted cymbal that you hit occasionally, you'll probably use it for some time. But if it's a ride cymbal that's going to be hit frequently and consistently, then you might be replacing it before too long. A small ding in the edge doesn't necessarily destroy the value of the cymbal, but I wouldn't pay more than 40% of suggested retail price for it.

Can You Hear Me Now?

Another dilemma I've faced when shopping for a used cymbal is not being able to hear it because the seller doesn't have a cymbal stand handy. This typically happens at garage sales, flea markets, or pawnshops. If it's a high-end cymbal with no visible cracks or dings, and the seller only wants a few dollars for it, then this is a no-brainer. It doesn't really matter how the cymbal sounds. If it's not what you want, you can probably trade it for another cymbal with a sound that you prefer. But if the seller does have an idea of what the cymbal is worth and is asking 40% to 50% of suggested retail price, then you do need to try it out before you buy it. For years I've carried a small cymbal stand and a pair of sticks in the trunk



Drums and Therapy working hand in hand



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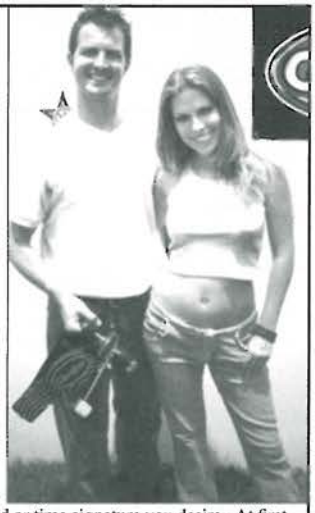

Struggling with my bass drum playing really sucks – I should know... For years I had horrible feet and my dream was to generate **machine gun** like speed & precision with my feet like Virgil Donati, but...

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Shop Talk

of my car just for this purpose. If you don't have a stand and a stick handy, you can try balancing the cymbal on your finger and hitting it with the wood part of a pencil. However, I strongly caution against doing this with a small cymbal, or you might send it across the room at high velocity.

And Finally...

Once you've purchased your small piece of drumming history, you will most likely face the dilemma of whether or not to clean it. If you decide to clean off twenty years' worth of accumulated dirt and tarnish, I recommend using only a non-abrasive cymbal cleaner. You should also be aware that cleaning the cymbal will surely change its sound. More than likely it will have greater

My ear has always been inclined toward cymbals that have been mellowed by a few thousand beatings.

sustain and quicker response. A smaller, lightweight cymbal might even have more of a shrill sound, which may take some getting used to.

If you're perfectly happy with the sound of the cymbal when you buy it, I suggest that you let it be and enjoy it the way it is. If your bandmates start nagging you to clean it, try saying, "I *did* clean it. Can't you tell?" This white lie has always worked for me.

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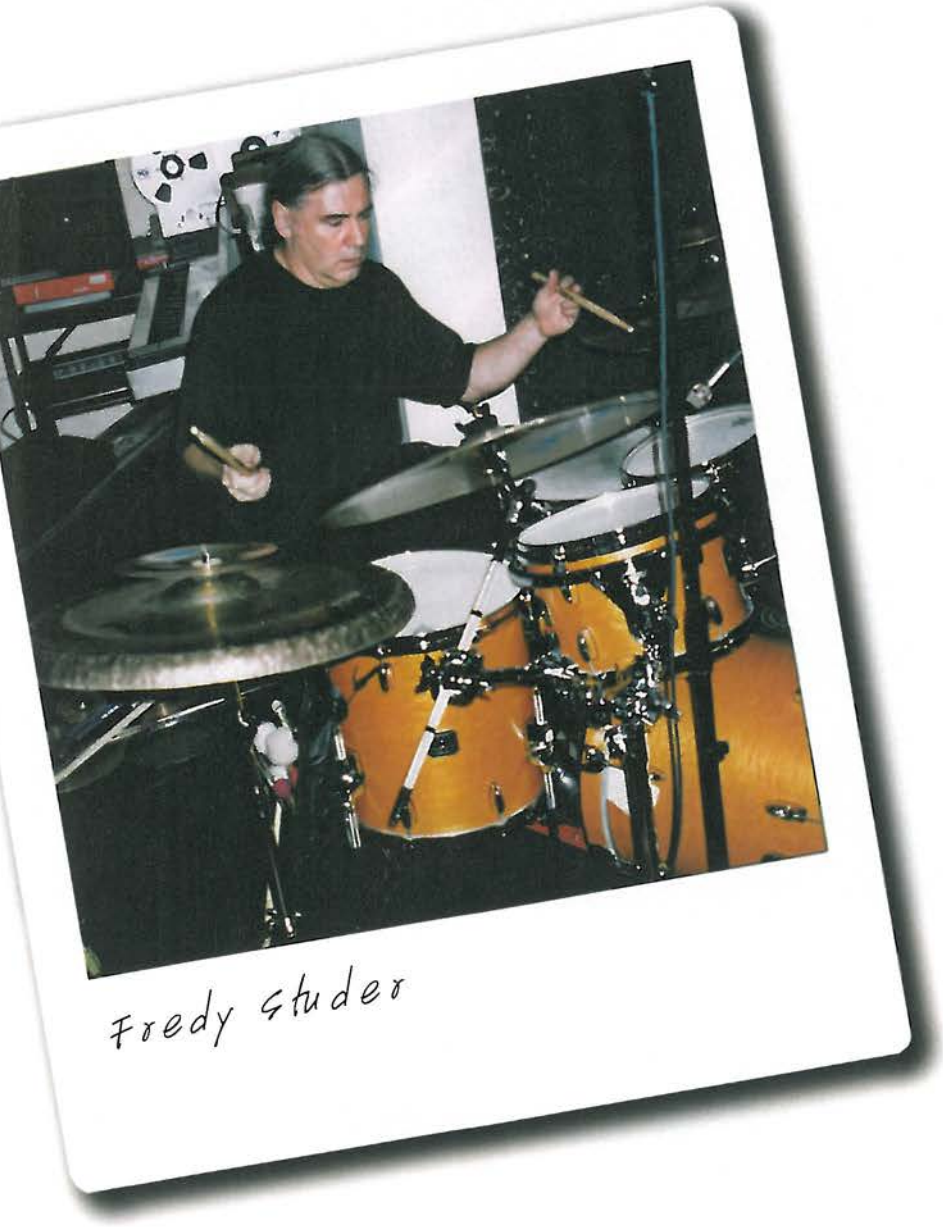
Fredy Studer's "Drummin' Chicago" Project

Percussion Summit In The Windy City

Story and photos by Michael Bettine

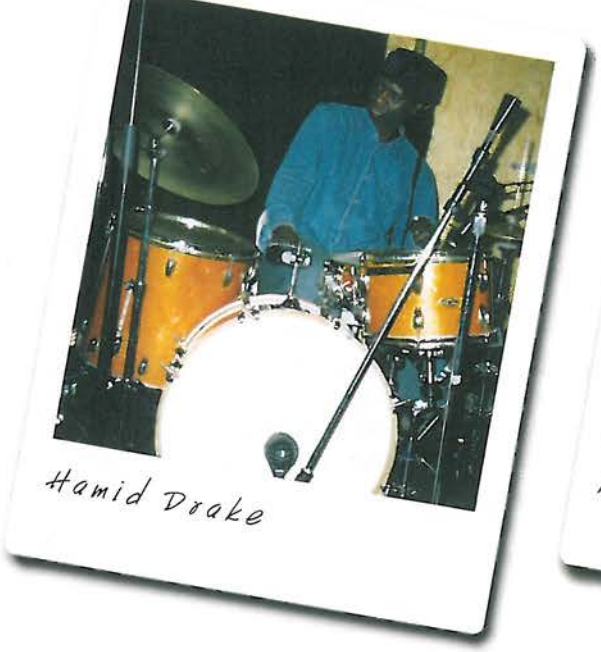
Fredy Studer has been one of the most respected drummers on the European scene for over twenty-five years. In 2002 he received a grant from his home city of Lucerne, Switzerland, allowing him to live in Chicago for three and a half months. Lucerne and Chicago have a "Sister City Agreement" to develop economic and artistic partnerships. The grant allowed Fredy to live in the heart of Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood, within walking distance of most of the major jazz and improvised-music clubs.



The grant stipulated that Fredy must create a specific work dealing with his stay in Chicago. Fredy's idea was to connect with local musicians and produce a recording of his stay. One of his goals was to meet Chicago drummers Hamid Drake and Michael Zerang. The two are highly innovative players much in demand around the world. They've also been playing together as a duo for many years—including a popular series of Winter Solstice hand drum concerts. "I went to all three of their Solstice concerts, which start at six in the morning," says Fredy, "to get a feel for how they play together. They are a strong duo, like a marriage." From there he decided to put together a recording featuring the two drummers and himself. The following is an account of that recording session.

The Setup

On a sunny winter day, the three drummers meet at Experimental Sound Studios on Chicago's north side. They've brought drumkits, various percussion instruments, and an assortment of hand drums. Fredy has also rented a 50" Paiste gong. He decides to set up in the center of the studio, with Hamid facing him on his right, and Michael facing him on his left, forming a triangle. Fredy plays a five-piece kit, augmented with small gongs and cymbals that he uses on top of the drums. Michael and Hamid each play four-piece kits. Michael also surrounds himself with an assortment of small cymbals, gongs, bells, and various "found percussion" items, such as metal trays and plates. Hamid prefers some small, handheld China cymbals and a Tibetan singing bowl.


Hamid Drake

Michael Zerang

After a soundcheck, Fredy presents a few pages of notes. Rather than writing exact scores, he has a series of instrument combinations, grooves, and moods he wants to explore. Considering the caliber of players involved, there's no need to rehearse anything.

Tracks And Sounds

They begin recording with Fredy hitting his bell chime, almost like a starting bell. As the ring fades, everyone joins in with small cymbal sounds. Things start building as they add drums and various "noise" sounds. All three listen intently as they create textures and timbres. These small gestures build to a crescendo with the three drummers pulsing together like a massive heartbeat. After ten minutes they stop. There are smiles all around.

The next piece features instrument assignments. Hamid plays China cymbals and a singing bowl resting on his drums. Michael plays a metal serving tray and an old bent cymbal, while Fredy plays small cymbals and various metals on his set. Fredy and Hamid start rubbing cymbals together in a circular motion. Hamid then moves to his toms with sticks, and things reach a rolling momentum. Then they're back to sounds, as Fredy scrapes a stick across his cymbals and gong. Michael switches to yarn mallets, while Hamid plays rolls around his kit. The playing swells and ebbs back down again before finally locking into a pulsing, breathing rhythm that winds down after the fourteen-minute mark. "The interplay is nice," says Fredy while listening back to the track. All agree that it feels good.

On the next track, they use an assortment of seed pods, small cymbals, temple cup gongs, and other metallic items played with mallets, knitting needles, and fingers. The small sounds are almost reverent or meditative, like in a church. Then Fredy wants them to sound "electronic." He uses a bow on his gong, eliciting high-pitched whines and squeaks. Michael scrapes an elephant bell across his snare head, while Hamid scrapes the tip of a stick on a China cymbal. The resulting sound is like feedback or radio frequencies.

The session picks up momentum as Fredy assigns mallets to Hamid, brushes to Michael, and knitting needles to himself for the next track. It starts quietly and becomes a conversation as they "talk" to each other, asking questions and giving answers. Hamid and Michael switch their brushes and mallets as Hamid hits a swing pulse. Things take off in a weird ballet, where you can feel the dancing as the pulse moves. Afterwards, Michael points to Hamid and laughs, "When you switched back to brushes, I had my eyes closed and thought it was me!"

"Movements On Skins" is just that, as the trio uses brushes, creating a swirling sound, almost like rain on a roof. The con-

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In The Studio

tinuum flows like waves until they stop together, as if on cue, after seven minutes. The next track utilizes brushes played in the air. "Use different kinds of motions," Fredy instructs. "This is just a framework. If you feel something else, that's cool." The drummers wave their brushes through the air, whipping them back and forth in short rhythmic bursts that sound like the wings of insects buzzing or a DJ scratching.

"Three Hi-Hats" sounds like a flock of chattering birds, with the quick open and closed hi-hat becoming a "squawk." The three stop and start a few times, sounding like the flock is taking off. Fredy and Hamid then move back to the drums, with Michael playing bird whistles. The music becomes a sort of Peruvian rainforest jam. Afterwards, they all agree that things are going well, with a lot of exciting material being recorded. "It's difficult, though," says Fredy, "to be both the producer and a player."

Fredy elicits unique sounds from a 50" gong

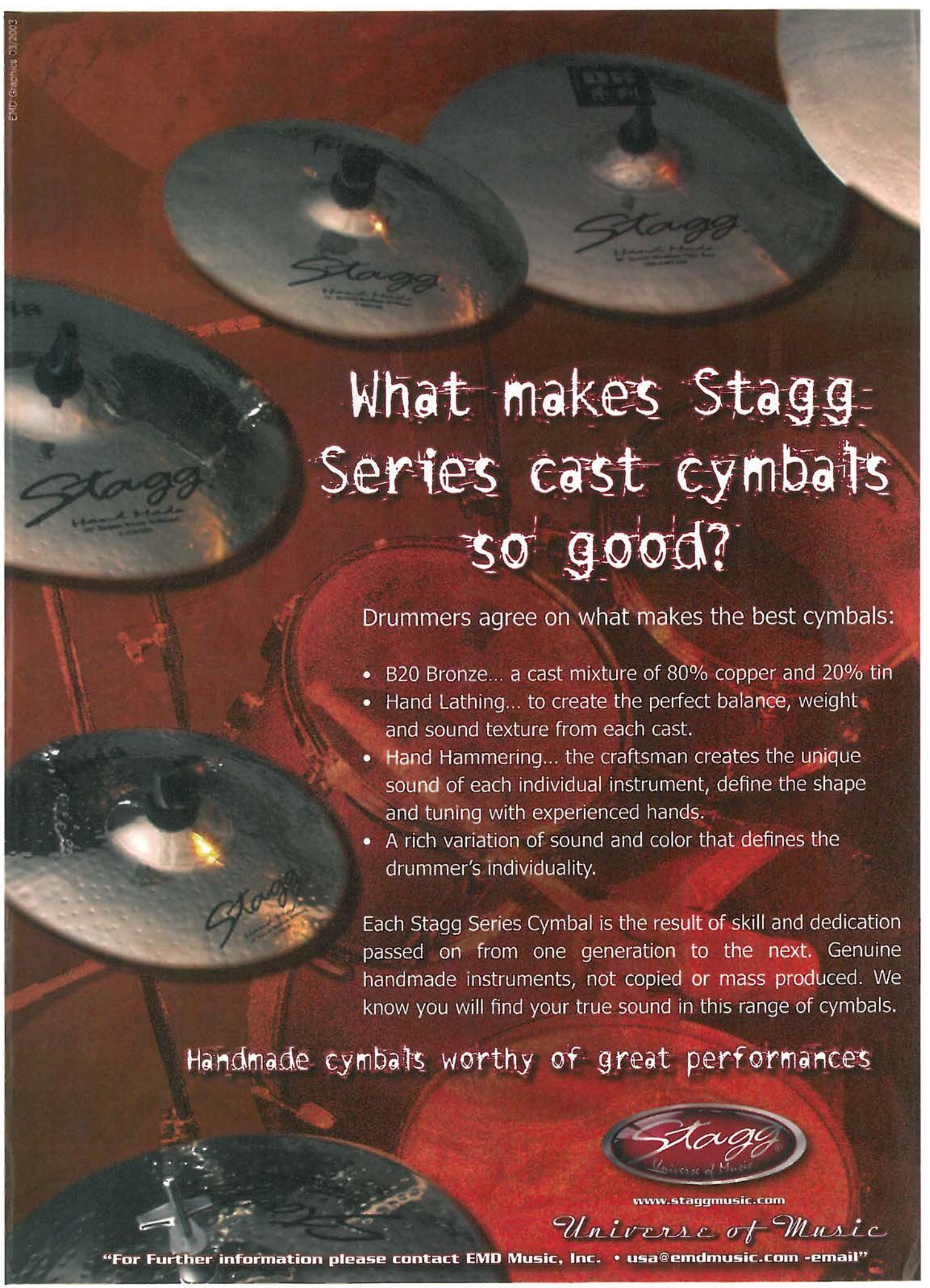
After a dinner break, the giant gong is hung in the middle of the studio and Fredy proceeds to play it with a super-ball mallet. The harmonics rise and fall in an eerie, otherworldly way, like a sci-fi soundtrack. Everyone is mesmerized by the sound. When he stops, Fredy asks how long it was. "Twelve minutes," replies engineer Pete Wenger. "I thought that was five or six minutes!" Fredy exclaims in surprise. "Wait, wait," he says, pointing to Michael sleeping on a couch behind his drums, "This guy's snoring!" Everyone breaks out in laughter at Zerang being able to sleep through two takes of Fredy playing the gong. But they've been working hard for nearly seven hours.

Fredy then has Hamid overdub a "one drop" reggae rhythm. Hamid listens through his headphones, picks up the pulse of the gong, and locks right into it, creating an intense groove. Everyone in the control room is excited during the playback. "What a sound," says Hamid, smiling. "It takes a moment for the pulse to get established on the gong, but then it lines up and is there." Finally, Michael adds various squeaking sounds by rubbing mallets across his rosined snare head. "That was beautiful," says Fredy. "I'll bring him in and out of the mix."

The time is getting late, and Fredy wants to get some hand drum tracks before they finish up. Hamid gets out his tabla and Michael places an old zither on his snare. He uses small bells and metal rods to scrape the strings and create a bizarre melange of sounds. Fredy colors things with his drums while Hamid lays down a groove. There's almost a "techno-ambient" feel, with sounds moving in and out of the mix, shifting from a rhythmic pulse to free-form and back.

Next, Hamid plays bodhran, Michael plays doumbek, and Fredy uses Tubz (hollow plastic-tube "sticks") on his kit. An incredibly deep groove is quickly established. The tempo shifts after a few minutes, as if on cue. The interplay between the players is so tight that it sounds like one drummer with six hands.

It's after midnight when Fredy decides to call it a night. The twelve-hour session has passed by quickly, with everyone pleased by the results. "I won't listen to this for a few months until I'm back in Switzerland," explains Fredy. "Then when I edit and mix it down, I can hear it fresh." Things get packed and loaded, and then everyone goes their separate ways, tired yet energized by the shared rhythmic experience of the day.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Hey, Rock Star!

by Gregg Potter

"I don't want to work, I just want to bang on the drum all day!" Isn't that how the song goes?

So "banging" on a drum all day isn't work?

Not if you believe the hype. Apparently anyone can buy a home studio rig for next to nothing, record a few tracks, pump out some cool Photoshop artwork, get an independent record deal with the results, and be on MTV in a month. Rock stardom? It's a walk in the park.

Well, I think we all know there's a little more to it than that.

Like you, I read all kinds of stories about kids who put a group together while still in high school, got matching tattoos on Tuesday, and landed a million-dollar record deal on Friday. Today they're all dating Playboy playmates and hanging out with Hef. In reality, the odds of that happening are very small. Most musicians who get to the top have had to slug it out in the trenches for years.

Most musicians who get to the top have had to slug it out in the trenches for years.

Over the course of rock 'n' roll history, there's been a handful of "name" drummers who've influenced thousands of hopefuls, who we immediately recognize—even today—by a single name: Ringo, Moon, Bonham, Criss, Peart, Bozzio. And I'll admit it, I've always dreamed of being one of those "name" players, a true rock star, with signature drum licks like the intro to "Walk This Way"—maybe even a feature in *Modern Drummer*, or a clip on MTV's *Cribs*.

I've had more than a taste of that. I've had major-label contracts, been on Billboard's Album charts, played in front of thousands of people, been on MTV, jammed with legends, recorded film soundtracks, been on the radio. I've even been able to buy back my own CDs, along with an autographed picture of myself on eBay. (It cost more to ship it to me than what I paid for it!) I've had my own fancy tour bus with cool artwork painted on the sides. I've got drum risers in storage bigger than some of the stages I play on now. There are

even players who do a better imitation of me than I do. Heck, I'm not embarrassed to say I take pride in that. Isn't that what we're in this for anyway—to be idolized?

But on the eve of my latest release, I sit here and wonder, How did I get here, where am I going, and what's it really all about?

Take, for instance, my last major-label deal. A year ago my group had a hot-shot manager who handled a platinum-selling band and had all the right connections. Soon we were being flown to LA by a major label to showcase. We already had sample copies of contracts in hand. Things were looking good.

But then "something" happened. The deal never materialized. Labels are finicky, A&R reps are finicky.... Whatever, I was back at home with my over-priced German sports car parked in my parents' garage quicker than you could say, "What happened, didn't Madonna like your band?"

One of the most disheartening lessons of the music business is that even if you have every duck lined up in a row, it doesn't always go down the way you hope. So you come home, take the garbage out, paint your backyard fence, and go back to hacking out Tuesday-night gigs at the local rock club. You start to reevaluate your talent, the group's talent, your choice of career....

But you don't quit. (We only contemplate that after watching some old Buddy Rich video.) You just play that much harder the next time. You build on all the experiences, the smaller victories.

Not every gig is going to be a record-label showcase. But every gig *is* an opportunity to entertain and impress somebody. It's better to hone your craft than to give up on it. You keep on going, and you keep dreaming that some day, you'll be that underdog who defies all the odds.

Underdogs are the ones who make the quest for drumming stardom interesting. We love to hear stories of their success. One time, a drummer sold me his cymbals for beer money. A year later his band recorded the biggest-selling single in CBS history. He was just a regular guy, but he played with tremendous drive and had a great heavy kick drum feel that inspired me to listen closer to his recordings, to hear how he did it. But what if that hit hadn't come? Would that have made his drumming any less impressive? Of course not. Great players are great players.

I had drum company endorsements before my first major-label release in 1989. I have my name printed on my sticks by a major drumstick manufacturer. These companies have stuck with me to this day. They see my ability, my passion, and the progress of my career. No, my career path might not be as fast and straight as that of some twenty-year-old whose first major-label release sells two million. But it's a big world out there, with many opportunities. With talent and perseverance, I have stayed the course.

There is room for everybody. Opportunities may come at unexpected times, but you will find your niche. I hate to quote more song lyrics, but dammit, some of those lead singers are clever. "You can't always get what you want, you get what you need!" My talent and drive have kept me in the game. Like a professional gambler, you're always working toward your next big win. Frustration will rear its ugly head, especially when you see someone making headway who you know couldn't even set up your snare drum properly. But there he is, waving at you from your TV set, with his skull tattoo, stylish nose ring, and post-glam leather outfit. Hey, I've even had roadies go on to greatness!

So to all you little-leaguers out there, keep at it! Just stay out of my way. The next time you bend one of my cymbal stands by tightening a wing nut too much...I won't yell...you might be Pearl Jam's next road manager!

Gregg Potter is one of the most sought-after rock drummers in Chicago. Gregg has played with such rock greats as John Entwhistle, Joe Walsh, and Steve Stevens. He plays Trick drums, Gibraltar hardware, Aquarian drumheads, Vic Firth drumsticks, Slug percussion products, and Zildjian cymbals. For more on Gregg, visit www.greggpotter.com.

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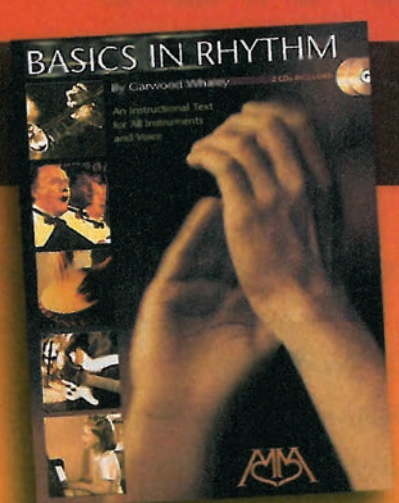

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Playing And Staying Well

Part 1: Drummers' Maladies

by Marion Turner

Anyone who works in a factory or sits at a computer all day knows about the aches and pains that come with performing repetitive tasks. Similarly, most of the problems seen in drummers are overuse syndromes. The repetitive nature of playing the drums causes problems in tendons, nerves, and muscles. The onset of these conditions can often be attributed to—or exacerbated by—a drummer's personal approach to playing, along with various external factors. But whatever the cause, when symptoms arise, it is imperative to start treatment early. It's also important to seek out professionals who specialize in the treatment of the upper limbs and spine (and, ideally, in the treatment of musicians).

Some of the factors that may contribute to a drummer's health problems include:

1. A sudden increase in time spent playing.
2. A change in the drum setup being used (different kit, stool, pedals, etc.).
3. Temperature. Playing in a cold environment reduces circulation to muscles.
4. Medical conditions like diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and thyroid disease.
5. Change in work conditions, such as starting a new job with new physical demands, or spending more time on a computer.

Warning Signs

You may be able to manage some of the above factors yourself; others may not be under your control. But you can monitor your own condition in any case. Simply being aware of the early warning signs of injury is paramount in the prevention of serious and chronic conditions. Signs to watch out for include:

1. Pain during or after playing or practicing.
2. Restricted movement and/or swelling in the arms, hands, neck, back, or ankles.
3. "Pins and needles" or numbness in one or both hands or legs.
4. Weakness and reduced overall stamina.
5. Changes in color, temperature, and sweating in the hands.

Posture Problems

Posture is the key to musculoskeletal stability and performance. And the spine is the core component of posture. The spine is made up of thirty-two vertebrae (bones) with discs separating them. These discs act as "shock absorbers" and spacers, allowing movement to occur at each level.

The spine is supported by ligaments (which prevent excessive motion) and by muscles (which produce the movement). The normal spine has three curves when viewed from the side—the most obvious being the curve in the small of the back. (See Figure 1.) When these three curves are maintained, the least amount of pressure is placed upon the load-bearing structures of the spine (the facet joints and discs). It is essential that the muscles are kept in good condition in order to support the spine in this good posture. If not, excessive strain will be placed on the discs, ligaments, and facet joints, resulting in pain and possible early degeneration of the spine.

Posture influences general health and the way the whole body is used. A change in posture will affect the way the arms (particularly the shoulders) and the legs can function. Muscle length and nerve tension may alter over time as a result of poor posture. Drummers have a tendency to slouch forward while playing, which increases the curves in the upper back and neck while reducing or flattening the curve in the lower back. Check yourself by having a video taken of you while drumming. Make sure you keep the video going for about

twenty minutes so your initial self-consciousness disappears and you relax into your usual habits. That's the best way for you to see what's happening with your own body.

Poor posture is one of the key causes of four conditions commonly suffered by drummers. These conditions are often ignored for too long before treatment is sought, with the result that they become chronic in nature. The four conditions are: back pain, thoracic outlet syndrome, carpal tunnel syndrome, and tendinitis.

Back Pain

Most of the back pain experienced by drummers results from a combination of poor fitness and strength, poor posture, and heavy lifting. Depending on the severity of the condition, pain may be felt as anything from a dull ache in the back to sharp radiating pain shooting down one or both legs, possibly with associated tingling and numbness. Stiffness may be present, and movement may be limited by pain. In severe cases, weakness may be present in the leg(s), and bladder and bowel control may be affected. The pain may be a result of degenerative disease, joint inflammation, ligament or muscle strain, disc injury, or nerve compression. It is important to address any back pain quickly with diagnosis and treatment from your doctor, physiotherapist, or chiropractor. Various tests may be performed to identify the cause of the pain. These include X-rays, CAT scans, PET scans, or MRIs.

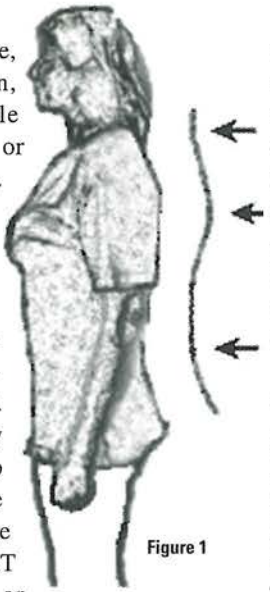


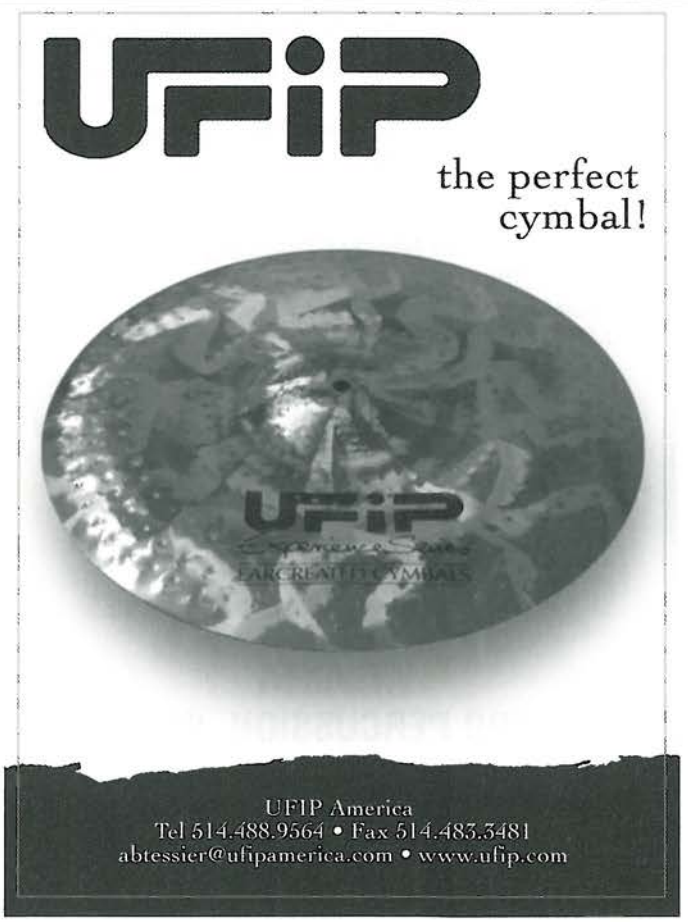
Figure 1

Factors that may contribute to back problems in drummers include:

1. Poor sitting posture, including slouching forward with a flattened or reversed low back curve.
2. Poor lifting/carrying techniques when setting up and breaking down the kit.
3. Poor spinal stability. This is usually caused by muscle imbalance, where some muscles are tight and others are overstretched. This leads to poorly balanced and uncoordinated muscle activity.
4. Disc and joint degeneration (which is non-reversible).
5. Underlying medical conditions. Such conditions as ankylosing spondylitis, scoliosis, osteoporosis, and Scheurmann's disease may increase the likelihood of experiencing pain while drumming.

Treatments for back pain will vary depending on the factors causing it. But in general they may include:

1. Anti-inflammatory medication.
2. Relative rest. This means reducing playing time to avoid aggravating the condition. (*Never* try to play through the pain.) To stop playing altogether is not generally advised, since this leads to tissue changes that can create new problems when you start to play again.
3. General and spinal muscle-strengthening and conditioning programs.
4. Manipulation and mobilization of stiff spinal joints.
5. Heat, ice, ultrasound, acupuncture, trigger-point therapy, traction, Pilates, Yoga.
6. Surgery may be required in severe cases.



Different techniques are used depending on the problem. Decompressive techniques are used to relieve pressure on the nerves and spinal cord, while disc fusions can help restore stability.

Thoracic Outlet Syndrome

The "thoracic outlet" is the area where the chest, shoulder, and neck meet. Major nerves and blood vessels pass through here on their way to the arm and hand. Thoracic outlet syndrome (TOS) is caused by compression of those nerves and vessels. It's usually felt as non-specific aching of the arm(s), and may be associated with fatigue or lack of endurance in holding positions, and tingling and/or numbness in the hands during use. There may also be color and temperature changes in the hands, which tend to go blue and cold regardless of the weather.

Since TOS is usually caused by the nerves and vessels being squashed as they pass through tight muscles in the chest area, it is commonly seen in people with droopy shoulders. Generally, the symptoms come on when the arm is raised. You can check this out by holding both arms in the "I surrender" position (arms straight out at the shoulders, elbows bent to 90°, hands up) while opening and closing the fists for sixty seconds. This test may reproduce the symptoms, but not always. Similarly, nerve conduction studies, x-rays, and vascular investigations do not always provide conclusive proof of TOS. This makes it a difficult condition to diagnose.

Causes of TOS in drummers include:

1. Arms held forward (reaching) and/or elevated for long periods of time.
2. Poor posture and muscle imbalance.
3. The presence of an extra rib coming off the last neck vertebra. This is quite rare.

Treatment of TOS may include:

1. Posture correction—particularly stretching tight muscles and strengthening weak ones. Part 2 of this series will offer some stretching exercises for the pectoral and scalene muscles that are generally recommended in the presence of TOS.
2. Revision of technique and practice habits.
3. Surgery. If an extra rib is present, it may be removed.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is a result of compression of the median nerve at the base of the palm of the hand as it passes through the carpal tunnel. (That's a small space between several bones.) The nerve shares this confined space with nine tendons, and any change in size of the tendons or the nerve caused by swelling or inflammation results in the nerve being compressed. This, in turn, leads to pain in the hand (and possibly up the arm), along with tingling and/or numbness in the thumb, index, middle, and sometimes ring fingers. In the early stages these symptoms are often worst at night, waking the sufferer from sleep. In more severe cases, symptoms will be present during the day, and weakness and general clumsiness (such as dropping things) will occur. The drummer will have difficulty holding his or her sticks.

Causes of CTS in drummers include:

1. Repetitive activity with the affected wrist bent forward (flexed) or backward (extended).
2. Repetitive or sustained tight gripping (holding the sticks too tightly).

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3. Medical conditions that can cause swelling, such as pregnancy, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis.
4. Previous wrist trauma or deformity.

Nerve-conduction studies are used to assist in the diagnosis of CTS, but in 25% of sufferers, the test results are normal. An accurate diagnosis is usually based on a combination of the sufferer's history and symptoms, a thorough physical examination, *and* nerve-conduction studies.

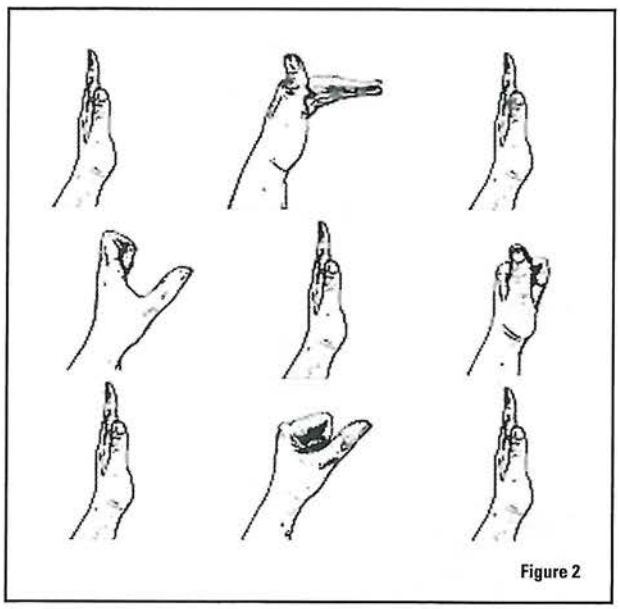


Figure 2

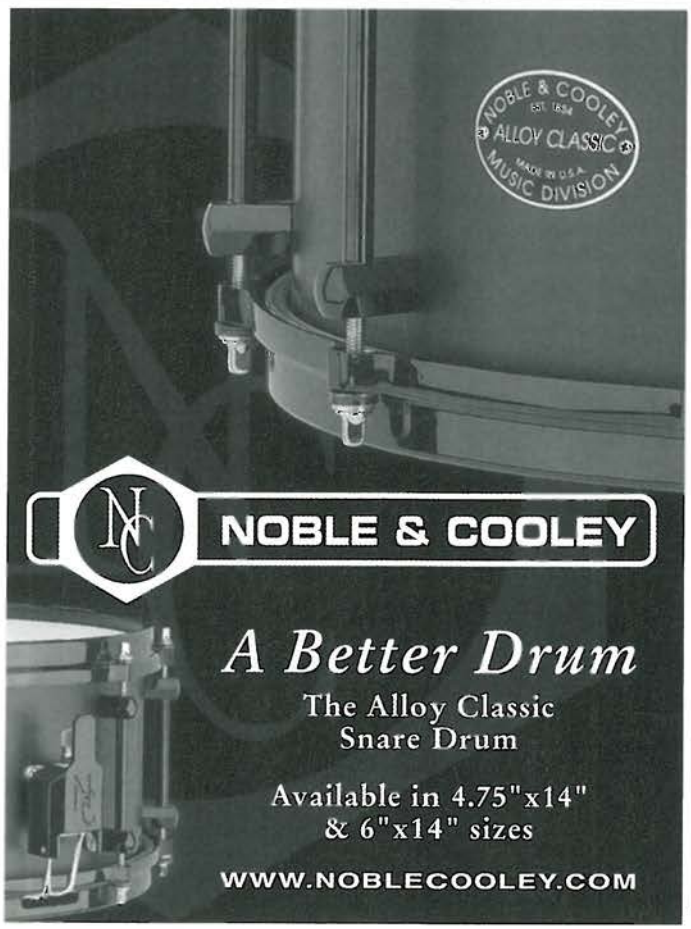
Treatment for mild cases of CTS may include:

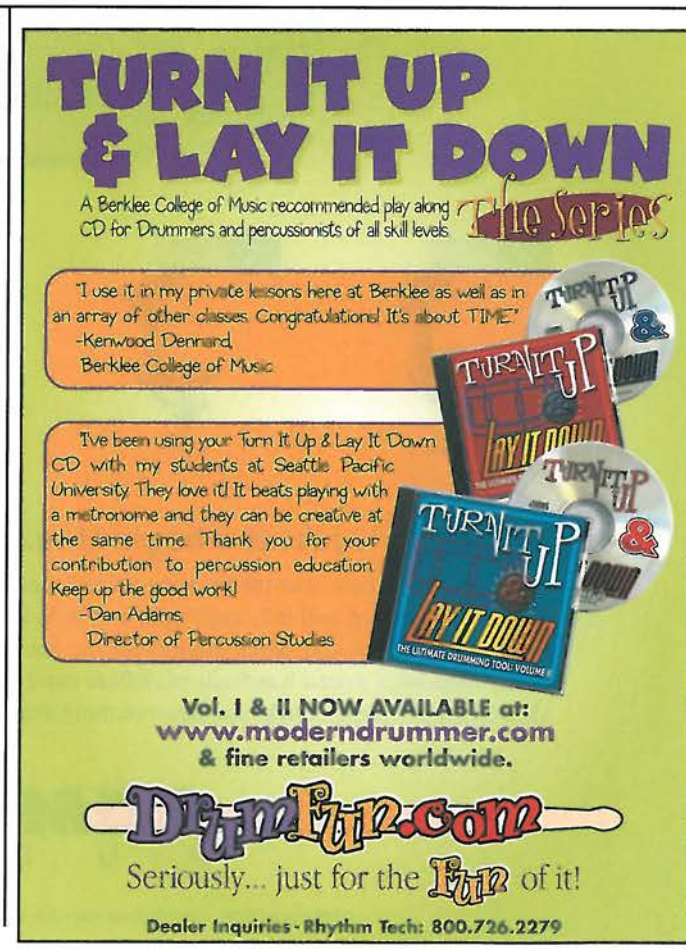
1. "Relative rest." (See back pain.)
2. Anti-inflammatory medication.
3. Splinting. Night splints are usually worn to prevent the wrist bending while sleeping. If the symptoms do not improve, the splint(s) may need to be worn during the day as well.
4. Median nerve stretch. (This will be explained in our next installment.)
5. Tendon gliding exercises. Refer to Figure 2. Follow the sequence of movements from left to right in each row. Complete the full sequence, then repeat five times. Do this five times a day.
6. Technique review. Is the affected wrist being used in an extreme position of forward or backward bending? Are the sticks being gripped too tightly?
7. Vitamin B6 to reduce nerve inflammation.
8. Steroid injections into the carpal tunnel to reduce swelling and inflammation. Ultrasound, laser, and acupuncture may also be useful.

In severe cases of CTS, surgery may be required. This involves an incision to divide the ligament enclosing the top of the carpal tunnel to decompress the space. This usually results in immediate relief of symptoms. The longer the symptoms have been present, the longer the recovery may take (and the less complete that recovery may be in some cases).

Tendinitis/Tendonosis

Muscles are connected to bones by smooth "cables" called tendons. As the muscle contracts (shortens), the tendon pulls the bone, producing movement at a joint. The term "tendinitis" is often misused, since it implies that inflammation must be present. Research has shown that





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in many instances inflammation is *not* present, even though the site of pain *is* the tendon. This condition is more correctly called "tendonosis." Either condition can occur as an acute problem where playing for three to four hours at once may lead to swelling, pain, and weakness the next day. Often, however, pain comes on gradually and worsens over time, becoming a chronic condition.

In drummers, tendinitis or tendonosis is commonly seen in the shoulders (impingement syndrome), the elbows (tennis elbow, golfer's elbow), the forearms, and the thumbs (intersection syndrome, DeQuervain's syndrome). Less commonly it may occur in the lower leg/ankle region, as a result of using the drum pedals.

Causes of tendinitis/tendonosis in drummers include:

1. Gripping sticks harder than necessary. Prolonged tight gripping leads to static muscle loading. This is where the muscles are contracted, but little or no movement is occurring. Static muscle loading compresses the blood vessels that supply oxygen to the muscles and tendons. This, in turn, results in fatigue and increases the likelihood of injury and pain.
2. Keeping the arms tense. This results in increased static loading in the neck, shoulders, and arms.
3. Keeping the lower legs tense. This also increases static loading.
4. No rest breaks.
5. Weakness in the shoulder girdle and spinal muscles. This leads to additional strain on the forearm and hand muscles. The stronger the "core" of your body is, the easier it is to use the extremities.

Treatment of tendinitis/tendonosis may include:

1. "Relative rest." (See back pain.)
2. Ice. This is particularly useful in the acute phase when swelling is present. Apply for ten minutes every hour to reduce swelling.
3. Anti-inflammatory medications.
4. Strengthening exercises for intrinsic muscles, finger extensors, and the shoulder girdle, plus gentle stretching exercises for the affected tendons/muscles as prescribed by a hand therapist.
5. Strengthening and stretching exercises for the affected tendons and muscles in the lower legs.
6. Splinting, massage, heat, ultrasound, trigger point therapy, and acupuncture may be helpful.
7. Review of technique and practice habits.
8. Steroid injections to reduce swelling and inflammation.

In severe cases of tendinitis/tendonosis, surgery may be required. The technique performed depends on the condition present.

After reading this list of maladies, you might be wondering whether you should hang up your sticks and start selling aluminum siding. But don't despair. Even though drummers are at risk for many of these maladies, there are measures to be taken to avoid them. And that's where we'll pick up in next month's installment.

Marion Turner is a physiotherapist with eighteen years' experience and a particular interest in upper-limb conditions. A significant number of her private patients are musicians, and she has been a guest lecturer on the subject of injury prevention at the University of Adelaide in Australia.

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Adema's KRIS KOHLS

Stable In An Unstable World

Days before this story was completed, I received an email from Kris Kohls via his management. Kris wanted to update me on his latest interests: "I've been *totally* into Steve Gadd and Buddy Rich lately. I watch Gadd's *In Session* and *Up Close* DVDs every night before I go to bed—and Buddy Rich's *Jazz Legend* DVD too. I just wanted to let you know that Buddy and Steve are my two favorite drummers! I'm excited!"

This contagious energy is one of Kris Kohls' many endearing qualities. A lean and athletic drummer who brings an electric punch to metal-rockers Adema, Kohls lives to play the drums. That may sound like a cliché, and indeed most successful drummers would say "drumming is my life" or "drumming has been veddy good to me." But when you speak with Kohls or see him play, you understand that his zeal for every drum part, every performance and recording session, and every topic to do with drumming is based on something that he loves *almost* as much as his family.

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Alex Solca

A self-confessed "drummer going through the motions" on Adema's 2001 debut, Kohls went through many life changes during the making of *Unstable*, the band's new release. A dedicated family man, father, and son, Kohls took a hard look at his place in the world and found himself wanting. Adema's first album went gold, allowing the Bakersfield band to tour Ozzfest with the likes of Rob Zombie, Sevendust, Ozzy, and The Red Hot Chili Peppers, bands whose drummers inspired him to dig in and practice. Today Kohls is all about improving himself and the music of Adema.

When the band played at Manhattan's Hammerstein Ballroom recently, Kohls began his night by warming up backstage. Playing a small rubber-headed pad, he seamlessly blew through all twenty-six rudiments, inverting directions and changing tempos. If you only know Kohls from Adema's popular debut release or his other recordings with Cradle Of Thorns, Videodrone, or Christian Death, his chops may come as a shock. On those records he bashes and slugs with the best of them, using both electronic and acoustic drums to, as Frank Zappa might have said, beat the music with his fists. But Kohls is full of surprises. After a twenty-minute rudimental warm-up, he hits the stage with Adema and puts his full body into the effort.

Sitting ramrod straight, Kohls slaps the drums, his left-handed approach to a right-

"I WAS ALWAYS PERFORMING, SO MY CHOPS WERE GOOD. BUT I WASN'T PUTTING IN THAT EXTRA TIME TO PRACTICE. AND FRANKLY, YOU NEED TO DO BOTH."

Kris's Kit

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B. 9x13 tom
C. 10x14 tom
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2. 19" AAX Studio ride
3. 15" HHX Groove hats
4. 19" AAX Metal crash
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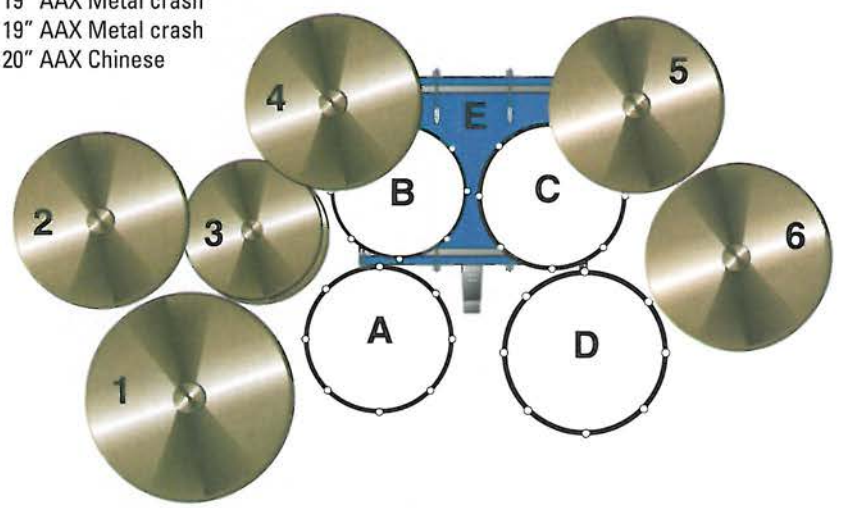
Hardware: Tama stands and pedals

Heads: Evans Genera Heavy Duty Dry on snare batter, Hazy 300 on snare-side, Hydraulic Glass on tops of toms with clear G1s on bottoms, EMAD on bass drum batter with EQ3 Resonant on front

Sticks: Vater 5B model with wood tip



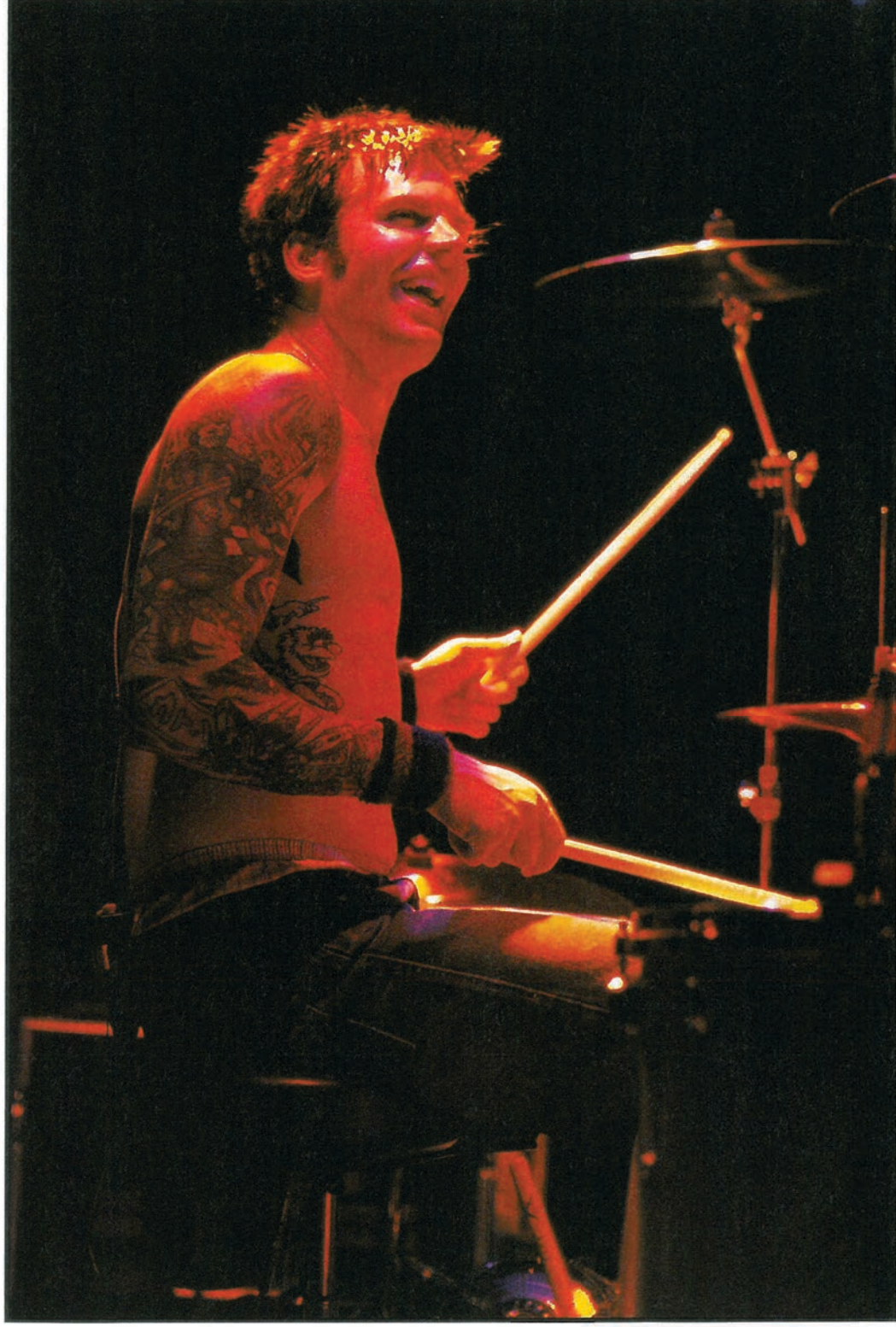
handed kit (or his weekly jujitsu workouts) perhaps enabling his ease of flow. He sings and slams, but his style is surprisingly graceful. Powerful? Oh yeah. Greasy? You bet. Kohls' assault reminds one of a panther attacking its prey.

Unstable shows the fruit of a drummer in the thrall of learning. With vocalist Marky Chavez, guitarists Mike Ransom and Tim Fluckley, and bassist Dave DeRoo, Kohls has evolved the band's sound as well as his drumming. Where too many drummers of the metal school pound out dull-witted, boom-bash patterns, Kohls underpins Adema's melodic metal with drum corps-styled marching cadences, buzz rolls, Stewart Copeland-esque cymbal flourishes, and funky, behind-the-beat rhythms that turn macho metal into a funky good time.

For some Adema fans, *Unstable* may signal a sellout of metal authenticity for crossover melodicism. But to that, thirty-one-year-old Kohls just laughs. Before responding, he looks in his wallet to locate a business card. Two frayed photographs fall out. One is a picture of his daughter, the other, a shot of the drummer with Paul McCartney.

"We make the music we want to make, and we don't want to repeat ourselves," Kohls says. "This is a more mature record, and we don't expect everyone to like it. And songs like 'Co-Dependent,' 'Rip The Heart Out Of Me,' and 'Needles' are heavier than anything on the first record. So anyone who says we've sold out hasn't listened to the record."

MD: Which drummers first inspired you?
Kris: I got started in the late '80s when I was in high school. My dad was a guitar tech for a band called The Dan Reed Network. During the summer of my sophomore year, I rode in their tour bus and hung



out behind the drummer all the time. I'd been drumming since I was eight. I would watch *The Muppet Show* and try to imitate Animal.

MD: You sound like you've done a lot of studying.

Kris: In my last *MD* interview, I said I didn't consider myself to be a technical drummer. I grew up on Tommy Lee and Chad Smith, guys that are physical and aggressive. They get that big monstrous sound. But things have changed. I've always been into studying, even though I've never had a formal lesson.

MD: But on *Unstable* you play buzz rolls and drum-corps style marching beats, and you get around the kit very well with a lot of speed.

Kris: From playing so much over the last couple of years, my drumming has taken a 180° turn. I practiced extremely hard for the new record. I worked on rudiments and crazy independence studies. When I got together with the band, I could feel my playing getting looser. I play a lot more relaxed now. And I'm using my fingers more instead of my arms. I use both, but I've refined the two.

We worked with producer Howard Benson [P.O.D., Cold, Papa Roach] on *Unstable*, and I had heard stories about him using session drummers if the band's drummer wasn't making it. I thought, "That's not going to happen to me." So I practiced really hard, and from the first day of the sessions I was nailing it.

When you first start playing in bands, you learn how to play some beats. But now I realize that what we drummers do is an honor and an art that you have to work at. It's like being an athlete, if you want to get to the next level, you have to practice.

MD: Too many guys practice all the time but they don't play.

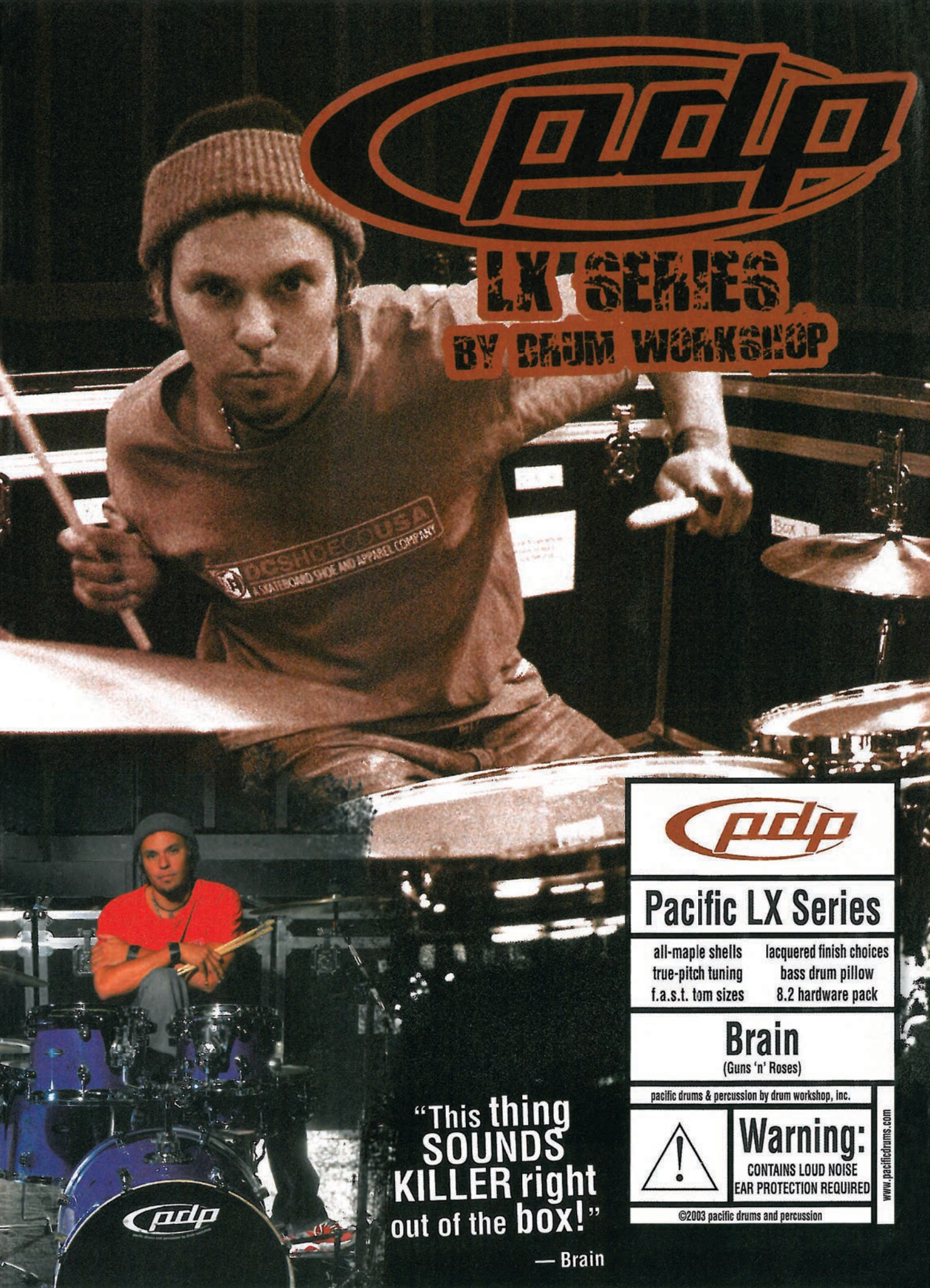
Kris: That's the thing. Early on in my career I had three or four gigs a week. I was always performing, so my chops were good. But I wasn't putting in that extra time to practice. And frankly, you need to do both. Now I'm *really* expanding my playing.

MD: Did you also play along with records when you were coming up?

Kris: Yes. Smashing Pumpkins, Faith No More, Red Hot Chili Peppers—I would even put on Beatles albums to work on that feel. Speaking of that, "Let Go," from the new album, is a very simple feel, but it was hard for me. I had to play a lot lighter and get into the groove. A lot of times the simpler beats can be harder if you're not used to playing them. But basically, I'm working to be the best drummer I can be.

MD: What brought about that desire?

Kris: It just started escalating. I haven't taken a break in three years. When the first Adema album came out in 2001, we toured for sixteen months straight. After Ozzfest we took three months off before writing the new record. Plus I went to play with Nikki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Kris Kohls

Sixx in Brides Of Destruction, so I didn't take any time off.

MD: Do you like your drumming on the first Adema record?

Kris: I do, but I think I've taken it to another level on *Unstable*. There are different feels on it, and I'm a much tighter drummer. On the first record there's a lot more programming and electronics, which I was heavily into then and still enjoy. I used to trigger everything live. We didn't play to tapes. I would start a loop with my Roland pads. It was like being a DJ and drummer at the same time. Now I just play my acoustic drums.

MD: You sound strong and creative on *Unstable*. It's not your usual metal rock bash. You show a lot of imagination and versatility.

Kris: I worked hard on the record, and I feel that we've made a great one. In his video, Steve Gadd says that when he plays a more relaxed groove, he'll keep a very straight posture. I've been picking up on those little things, like not gripping the sticks too tightly and not being so tense. My playing is 100% better than it was two years ago.

MD: Can you tell us a little about your background?

Kris: When I joined Adema, my career really started. We've been busy from day one. It's been kind of a Cinderella story. But before that I had been in Cradle Of Thorns for twelve years. That was my first band, and we did four albums. When that band broke up, I was floating around, playing with Gilby Clarke. Then Adema called about doing a demo. Marky called me on a Tuesday to do a demo on Saturday. He brought me a tape that night. I heard two songs, loved 'em, and wanted to be in the band right away.

MD: What attracted you to the music?

Kris: I loved that it was heavy. The arrangements were simplistic, to the point of being pop arrangements, but they were also heavy with an emotional feel and good melodies. The songs were "Close Friends" and "Blow It Away," which are on the first record. So we did the demo on Saturday, and that Monday all sorts of labels were calling us. We were on a plane to New York two weeks later to meet with record labels. We found ourselves in the middle of a bidding war. All the years of struggling paid off.

MD: In your interview on Tama's Web site, you say that you have more of a funky style than most drummers playing heavy music. Most of those drummers are straight up and down. You and Adema's bassist don't constantly rely on hip-hop grooves. You play rock grooves, but you're funky with them.

Kris: Chad Smith is one of my favorites. He plays rock but also funk. Even Tommy Lee has a swing to his playing. He can play four on the floor and it makes you want to move. For a heavy metal drummer, Tommy is the man. He totally sums up where I come from.

MD: You've said that you really prefer Tama drums to some of the other brands you've played.

Kris: Tama drums feel better to me. Plus they have an amazing sound—huge, full, and very rock 'n' roll.

MD: How do you tune your drums?

Kris: I like my heads tuned looser than most drummers do. I like a big rock sound. A lot of guys in the metal scene tune their snares really tight and pingy, but I'm not into that. I like a warmer sound.

MD: Do you use double bass drums or a double pedal?

Kris: I use a double pedal. I started really working on double kick about a year and a half ago. I practice mainly doing singles with my feet. But I also work on doubles and paradiddles.

MD: On "Needles," a tune from the new album, you show some fast double bass chops.

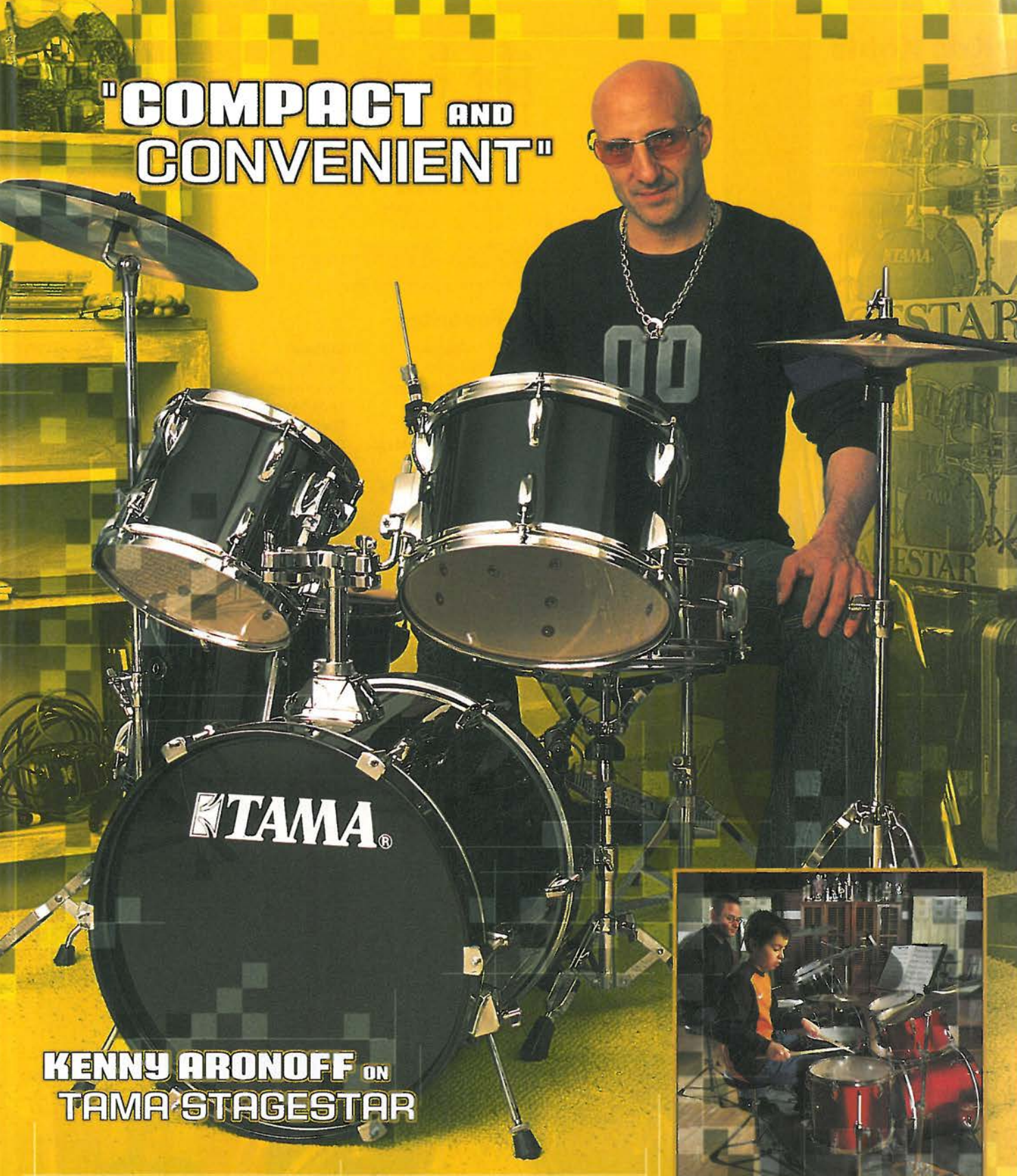
Kris: It's a fast tune, but the double bass work is just 16th notes. I had to really practice it to get it up to that speed. I lift my whole leg when I play the bass drum, but with double bass I try to relax more. I keep my back straight and my heels as close to the pedal boards as possible.

MD: I also want to ask you about how much programming is used on the new album. "Unstable" sounds like it was partially programmed.

Kris: That started off with a loop I had written on the tour bus. I had the Akai MPC going, and Marky heard the groove and started writing around it. You can still hear that original drum loop in the verses under my acoustic drums.

The difference between this record and the last one is that this time the acoustic drums were a priority flat-out, no matter

"COMPACT AND CONVENIENT"



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Adema	Adema
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Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
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Mötley Crüe	Shout At The Devil	Tommy Lee
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Red Hot Chili Peppers	Mother's Milk	Chad Smith
Red Hot Chili Peppers	Blood Sugar Sex Magik	Chad Smith
Smashing Pumpkins	Siamese Dream	Jimmy Chamberlin
Jane's Addiction	Nothing's Shocking	Stephen Perkins
Faith No More	The Real Thing	Mike Bordin
Soundgarden	Badmotorfinger	Matt Cameron

what. If the music didn't work with the acoustic drums, then it wasn't going to work.

MD: What percentage of the drum sounds on *Unstable* are triggered?

Kris: After the track "So Fortunate" was done, the producer put a sampled tom sound over the real tom and blended them together. But most of the songs have acoustic drum sounds.

MD: You played Roland V-Drums with Videodrone and early on in Adema?

Kris: It was all V-Drums with Videodrone. Then I took it to the next level with Adema, playing V-Drums and acoustic drums. During the first album, I would use the pads to trigger loops while I was playing the beat. I would trigger breakbeats, percussion sounds, and synth drum loops. But I don't do that anymore. It's all pure drums.

MD: How hands-on are you in the recording process?

Kris: Very. When I do my drums, I can get a little obsessive-compulsive. The producer would say, "Great take," but I'd always want to do another one. I wanted it to be perfect. I never used to consider myself to be a technical drummer. I played with a lot of emotion. But now I want to make sure my performances are solid, spot-on, and tight.

MD: Was any one track particularly hard for you and the band to record?

Kris: In the second half of "Let Go," I'm playing a Jim Keltner/Ringo Starr kind of beat. It's very simple and direct. That was the hardest one for me. I'm not used to playing that way.

MD: There are songs on *Unstable* where you and the bassist are playing in tight unison. The bass drum patterns are often quite busy within the bar. How do you map that out?

Kris: A lot of it is a feel thing. Dave and I will sit and talk about whether we want to line up or not. I'll explain my licks to him. And we're very open to each other's ideas. He and I practiced together for days, just the two of us, to make sure we were solid and tight.

I also worked with a click to prepare. In fact, I've been practicing with a click from a young age. I can play accurately to almost any tempo. And when Adema records, they count on me to be right on the click.

MD: How do your drum parts develop?

Kris: In general, they begin with a straightforward groove with the kick on 1 and 3 and the snare on 2 and 4. Then as the songs develop I experiment with altering the parts. But I always start with a basic groove.

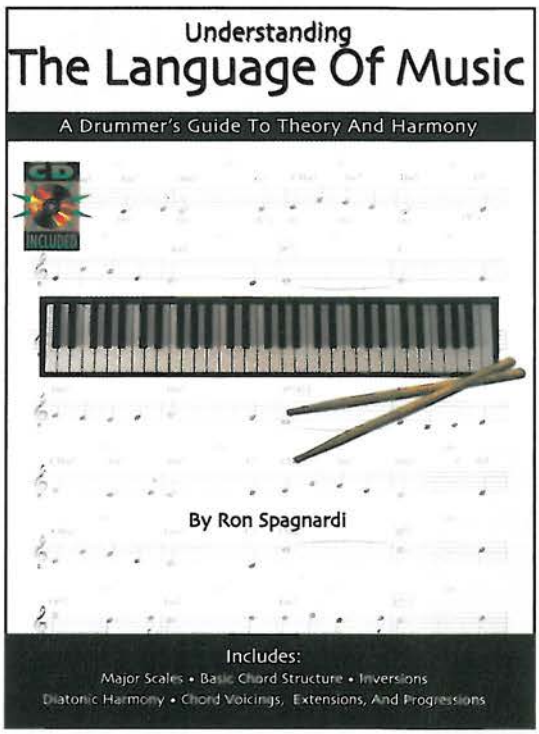
I used to be a crazy basher. I can still do that, but I can do other things too. I'm just consumed with drumming. I've told myself that I want to make a mark on the drumming world, but I know I have a long way to go. I'm motivated. Whenever I notice that my chops have taken a step forward, it's *so* gratifying.

BRAND NEW

From The MD Library

Understanding The Language Of Music

A Drummer's Guide To Theory And Harmony



If you missed out on any of *Modern Drummer* editor Ron Spagnardi's 16-part "Understanding The Language Of Music" series as it appeared in MD's *Musical Drummer* department, here's your chance to have it **all in one handy book**.

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Edmund Yazzie

Thirty-five-year-old Edmund Yazzie of Coolidge, New Mexico is the first Native American drummer to be featured in *On The Move*. Since becoming involved with music in the fifth grade, Edmund has experimented in various styles, including reggae, heavy metal, and country. In 2000, he cofounded a "Christian alternative" band called Double Edge. Since that time, the group has played almost everywhere on the Navajo reservation, using their hard rock–based "extreme Christian music" to bring a positive message to local youth. Reservation newspaper *The Navajo Times* has described Double Edge as "a wrecking crew," due largely to Edmund's solid and powerful drumming. Edmund does that drumming on a Yamaha kit with Zildjian cymbals.

In addition to his drumming activities, Edmund worked in law enforcement for fifteen years. He also worked with D.A.R.E., a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of substance abuse by young people. Edmund hopes that his musical activities can also serve as an inspiration to Native American youth.

Steve Adorno

Steve Adorno of The Bronx, New York is the drummer, bandleader, and producer of a high-energy ensemble known as Seguida (www.example.com). The group specializes in "New York Latin rock," a style that melds sultry Afro/Cuban rhythms, blazing horns, funky B3 sounds, and dance grooves. (Think Santana meets Tower Of Power at the Odyssey Disco.) Steve is featured on the group's two CDs on Fania Records, *Love Is* and *On Our Way To Tomorrow*.

Steve's solid Bronx backbeat has powered several other name acts, including Sara Dash, Linda Hopkins, and Kid Creole & The Coconuts. He was also the drummer on G.Q.'s '80s dance hit "Disco Nights." Touring with G.Q. took Steve to stadiums and major festivals, sharing the stage with acts like Kool & The Gang, The Isley Brothers, and Natalie Cole. He cites Michael Shrieve, Billy Cobham, and Steve Gadd as major influences.

These days Steve is devoting his time to keeping Seguida in the spotlight. In addition to their recording activities, the group performs regularly throughout the New York City area. Steve drives the band on a Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute kit with Ziljdian cymbals and LP percussion.

Stuart Joel Ottenstein

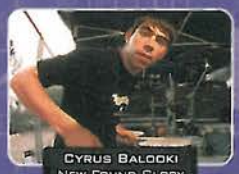
Maplewood, New Jersey's Stuart Joel Ottenstein has been playing drums for nineteen of his thirty years. "From day one," he says, "drums have been my obsession. My only goal was to become the best drummer that I could be."

Stuart never lost sight of that goal. Throughout his school days he played with several bands, always striving to surround himself with the best possible musicians. This included ten years in a wedding band with his guitarist father, an experience that Stuart says helped to develop his versatility. He also gained inspiration from drummers as diverse as Eric Carr, Stewart Copeland, Phil Collins, Jeff Porcaro, John Bonham, Liberty DeVitto, and Danny Seraphine.

Stuart's current band is Root 80 (www.Root80.com), an '80s cover band playing regularly in the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut area. "It's a great gig for me," he says, "because it lets me step into the shoes of some of my favorite drummers." The group's demo CD features tunes done originally by Journey, Bon Jovi, Loverboy, and Bryan Adams. On it, Stuart does an admirable job of providing authentic drum parts without sacrificing his own individuality. He also adds vocals and percussion.

Stuart performs on a tiger-striped DW kit with gold hardware, equipped with Zildjian, Paiste, and Sabian cymbals and LP percussion. As for goals, he says, "The ultimate gig, for me, would be to go on tour with a national act. I know in my heart that I have what it takes to be up there with the big boys. But whatever the gig, I plan on drumming for the rest of my life."

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.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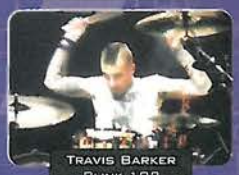
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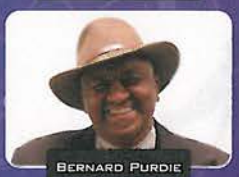
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Vicki Randle
Tonight Show Band

Jen Lowe
Acres

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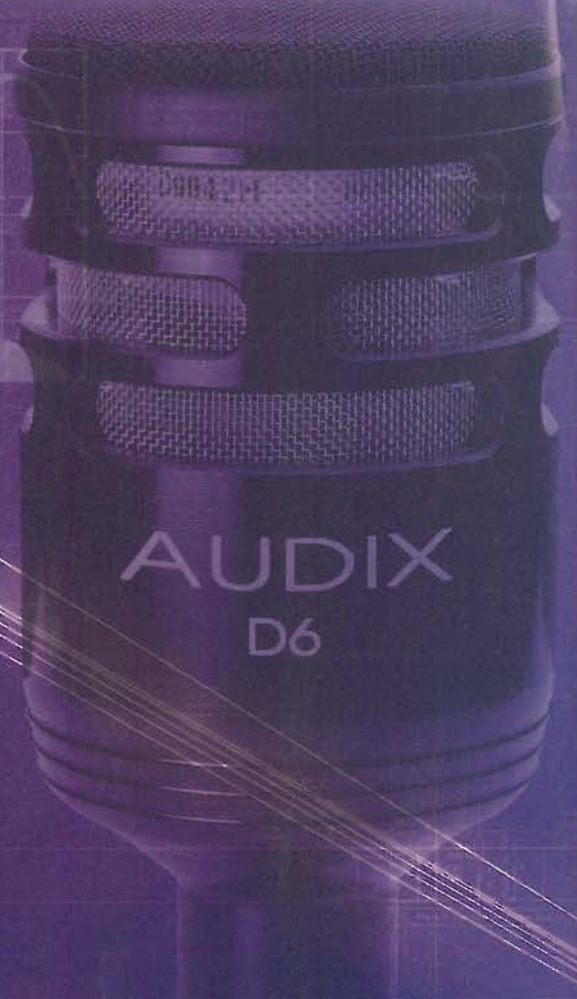
Luis Conte



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Tama's new Blue Suede Seats are a "cooler" take on the company's flame-patterned Hot Seat. The HT730EADB features a dark blue seat with red piping; the HT30EALB is light blue with red piping. Both models feature Tama's comfortable but firm 1st Chair Ergo-Rider seat, said to encourage correct posture while providing complete playing freedom for the legs. Retail price for each throne is $199.99. **(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.**

What's In A Name?

New Vic Firth Signature Sticks

Vic Firth has introduced several new signature drumstick models. John Dolmayan (System Of A Down) designed his stick for comfort, balance, and durability, with a tip and neck sculpted for greater bounce and more speed. The SDOL features a 16"-long, .585"-diameter 5A shaft with a barrel tip, making it a beefy stick that's easy to play.

Tool drummer Danny Carey wanted a stick with a cut-in design in the gripping area for improved comfort. The SDC also features a tapered butt end for improved balance. The hickory stick is 16½" long, with a diameter of .695" at the butt and .630" on the shaft.

WUV, drummer for P.O.D., created the new SWUV signature stick. It features a 7A shaft (15½" long and .533" in diameter) with an enlarged teardrop tip "for a light feel with a big sound."

The SGH, designed by Gerald Heyward (Mary J. Blige), features a barrel tip, a lengthy shaft, and a short taper "for really laying into a groove." The hickory stick is 16$^{3}/_{16}$" long and .570" in diameter. All new models are priced at $13.50 per pair.

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Alternate Mode Power Rack And Power Cube PC, MalletKAT PRO Version 4.1 Upgrade

Computers are becoming more and more essential elements of musical creation all the time. But not every computer is musician-friendly. On the other hand, Power Rack and Power Cube PCs from Alternate Mode are specially tailored for music performance. They're said to be "fast, powerful, and designed for easy travel and set-up." The computers come with a full Gigabyte of drumsets, percussion instruments, loops, and more. This creates a turnkey environment for the musician, reducing the time required for programming setups.

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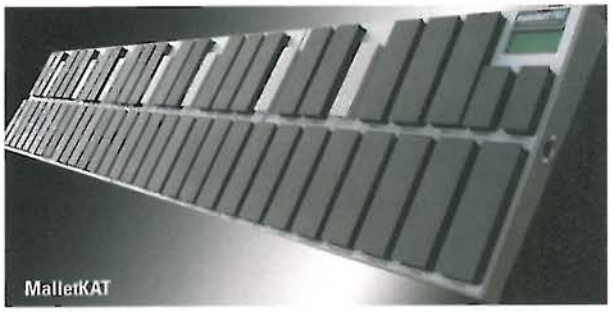
Power Rack

The malletKAT MIDI Mallet Percussion Controller offers an improved feel with newly designed playing pads, increased dynamics with software control, and new performance features. The new malletKAT alternately turns itself into a control surface where the "black" keys turn on controllers and the "white" keys send discrete CC# values.



The malletKAT PRO version 4.1 also offers Auto Gate Control, Loop/Latch Performance Modes, Velocity Shift Modes, additional Foot and Breath Controller Assignments, and a number of other upgrades. The user-installable chip upgrade is available directly from Alternate Mode for $129.00.

(413) 594-5190, www.alternatemode.com, katpercussion.com.

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The CODA five-piece Junior Drumkit (DS-015) from Music Link is designed to be a realistic but scaled-down starter kit for kids. It comes with a bass drum, a floor tom, two rack toms, a snare drum with stand, a 10" cymbal with holder, a bass drum pedal, and drumsticks. The set is currently available in a classic red covered finish, at a list price of $129.95.

For drummers with full-size sets, CODA offers a new Premium Drum Bag Kit (CD-300-KIT) said to give drummers all the bags they need to keep a five-piece kit covered. Each bag features a padded, 600-denier DuraGuard nylon exterior. The interiors boast 14 mm of high-density padding to keep drums safe from the studio to the stage. The kit includes three power-tom bags, a bass drum bag, a snare bag, and a drumstick bag, all at a list price of $119. **(888) 552-5465, www.themusiclink.net.**

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GERALD HEYWARD (MARY J. BLIGE), TONY ROYSTER, JR. (3LW), FISH (JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE), NISAN STEWART (MISSY ELLIOTT) KERRY GRIFFIN (AVANT), OMAR PHILLIPS (ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT), VICTOR ALEXANDER (OUTKAST), PAUL JOHNS (ALICIA KEYS), GG GONAWAY (MARIAH CAREY)

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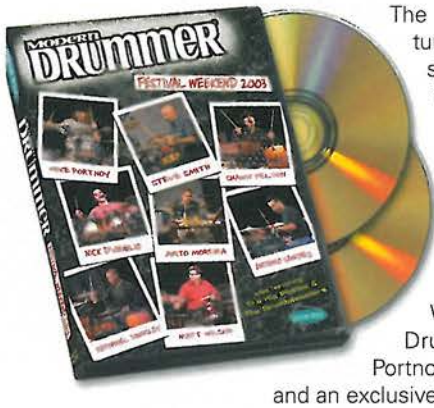
If You Couldn't Be There...
Hudson Music MD Festival Weekend 2003 Double DVD



The Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2003 DVD from Hudson Music features appearances by an incredibly eclectic group of drummers. The two-disc set contains almost six hours of performances, interviews, and bonus features in crystal-clear digital audio and video, along with easy-to-navigate menus and chapter selection.

Disc One features Mike Portnoy (with Yellow Matter Custard and Dream Theater), Steve Smith & Vital Information, Matt Wilson & His Quartet, Nathaniel Townsley & His Trio, Hip Pickles, and Mike Orris Jr. (winner of *MD*'s Undiscovered Drummer contest in the under-18 category). Disc Two presents Shawn Pelton & House Of Diablo, Airto Moreira, Antonio Sanchez, Nick D'Virgilio, The Drumbassadors (René Creemers and Wim DeVries), and Louis Santiago Jr. (winner of the Undiscovered Drummer contest in the over-18 category). Bonus features include Mike Portnoy rehearsal footage, stick tricks with Steve Smith and the Drumbassadors, and an exclusive photo gallery.

The Festival Weekend 2003 double-DVD is priced at $49.95. **Modern Drummer Publications, (973) 239-4140, www.moderndrummer.com; Hudson Music, (888) 796-2992, www.hudsonmusic.com.**

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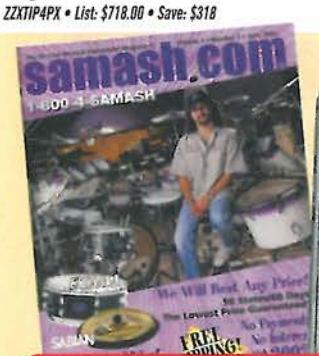

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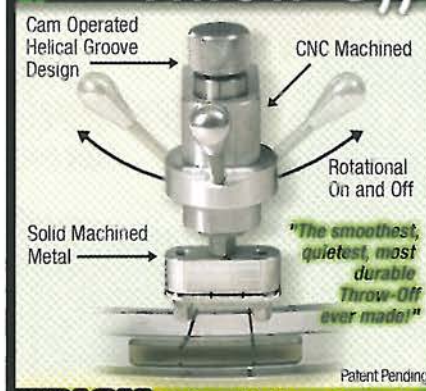

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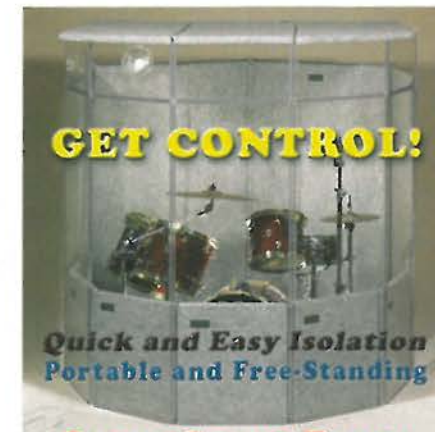

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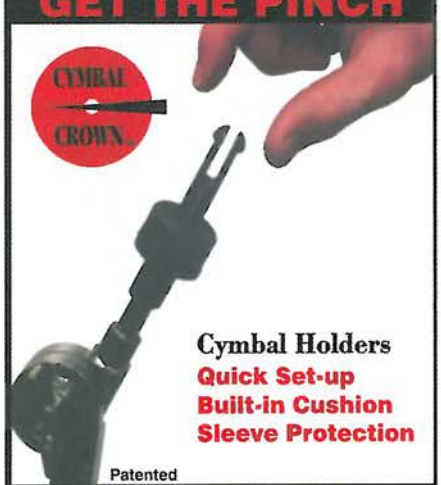

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-H.E.A.R. Founding Donor, Musician Pete Townshend Rolling Stone Magazine July, 1989.

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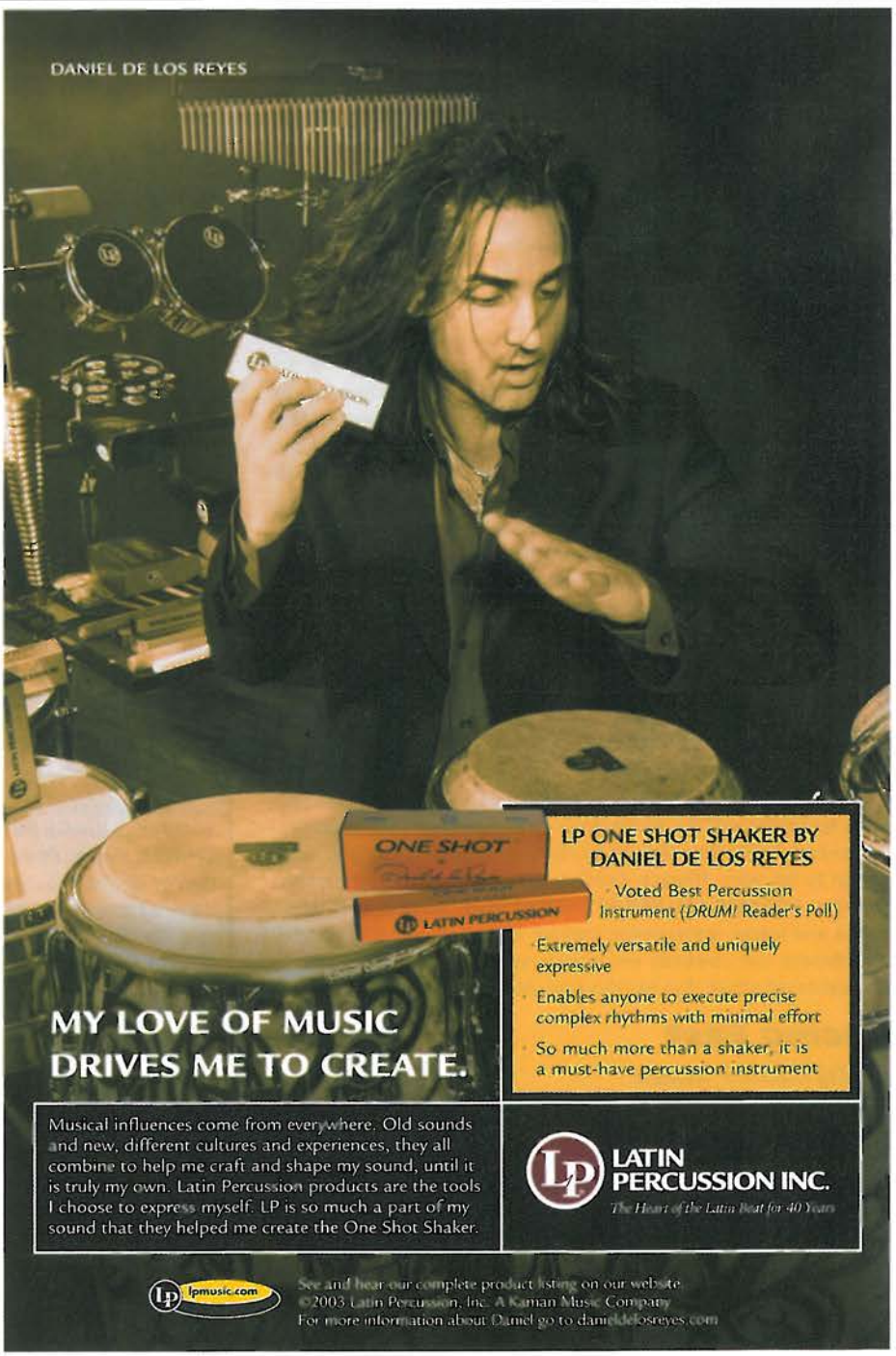

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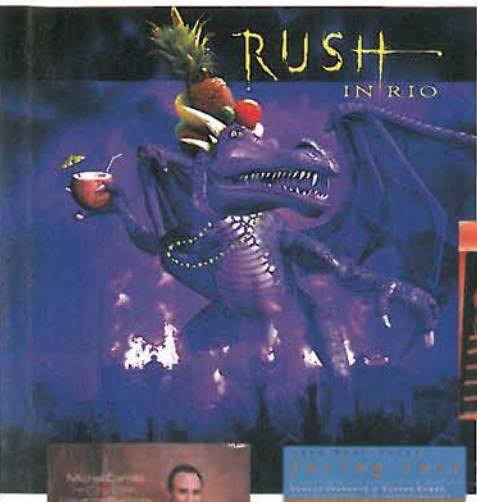

Rush

In Rio (Atlantic Records)

If it's true that "perfect is the enemy of the good," then I'd have to say *Rush In Rio* is pretty darned good. The audience at this November 2002 Brazil concert is so loud in the mix, it sometimes feels like you're in the *middle* of it. Still, **Neil Peart**'s wonderful performances cut through clearly. In fact, the band's raunchy riff-driven sound translates more genuinely here than on any of their four previous live albums. Plus, this three-disc collection offers a golden set list (twenty-eight songs across three hours), luscious drum tones, and air-tight yet still loose and fun performances. Seminal tunes like "YYZ" and "Limelight" might leave you feeling positively saucy after listening. And Neil's solo "O Baterista"—full of rolling fills, electronic precision, and humor—is so *human*, I dare say it might just feel better than your first romantic kiss. **Sean Enright**

Michel Camilo

Live At The Blue Note (Telarc)

Over the years, Dominican jazz pianist Michel Camilo has worked with great technicians of the drums, from Dave Weckl to Zach Danziger. But on *Live At The Blue Note* he finally takes on a drummer with roots similar to his own. Through Camilo's circus-like tunes and organic rhythms, **HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ** plays it both Afro-Cuban and fusion, maneuvering through brisk grooves using colorful woodblocks and cowbells and soloing with blazing fusion pummel and whirlwind attack. Too bad there are no pics. **Ken Micallef**

Facing East

Facing Beloved (independent)

An east-meets-west quintet cut from the cloth of John McLaughlin's Shakti, Facing East claims their own sound. Leader **John Wubbenhorst**'s soaring flutes lend a fluid, fleeting ease to the complex ragas, while classical guitar and electric bass are driven by a duo of South Indian drum masters. **T.H. SUBASH CHANDRON** on ghatan (clay pot) delivers rapid twisting rhythms with astonishing hand technique. **GANESH KUMAR** accompanies on kanjira (a small frame drum with lizard-skin head), deftly punctuating the ghatan. The sonic, rhythmic variety these masters pull from ancient, physically "simple" instruments will inspire all drummers. (www.facingeast.com) **Jeff Potter**

rating scale

poor — classic

The Klezmatics

Rise Up! Shteyt Off! (Rounder)

Devoted yet questioning, reflective yet joyous, The Klezmatics are a complex and multifaceted lot. Throughout *Rise Up!*, the latest in the downtown New York group's seventeen-year career, a prayer leads to a party, and back again. **DAVID LICHT** punctuates the contemporary Jewish ethnic music perfectly with a clear sense of klezmer tradition, crisp snare work, and understated hand drumming. This LP appears to be partially inspired by the tragedies of September 11, 2001; its thematic centerpiece, "I Ain't Afraid," lifted by Licht's second-line-like pulse, is a rousing appeal to watch what you do in the name of religion. **Michael Parillo**

Robert Randolph & The Family Band

Unclassified (Warner Bros.)

Unclassified is the first studio recording from the sacred-steel whiz kid who has stirred quite an underground buzz with his Jimi Hendrix-like lap steel pyrotechnics. The Family Band provides a funky foundation filled with Gospel two-beats, Southern funk, pseudo Latin, and pop stylings. Robert's cousin **MARCUS RANDOLPH** rocks the drum chair with a loose and bouncy feel. Nothing fancy in the way of drum technique, just a happy flow with an occasionally inspired fill. This spirited crew may be one of the first on the jam band circuit to cross over into the mainstream pop market. **Mike Haid**

The Bronx

The Bronx (Ferret/White Drugs)

Ever drive a '70 Hemi Cuda 426 with the throttle stuck open and crappy brakes? Well, we sure hope you haven't, but a spin of The Bronx's debut is the possible sonic equivalent to such a scenario. Powered by **JORMA VIK** behind the wheel...er...kit, this Hollywood-based punk act is firing on all eight cylinders, with Vik's high-octane stickwork in full effect. His accents are precise yet brutal, and there's an overall fluidity to his performance that's rarely encountered in today's world of computer-based editing, sampling, and triggers. Just remember to buckle that safety belt! **Waleed Rashidi**

KICKIN' OUT THE NEW

Pet Lover, Vertical Horizon, The High Strung

Pet Lover's **GREGG POTTER** loves to play his drums! On *New Game*, Potter's feel is slick, yet his raw energy shines throughout. The songs are full of syncopated crashes, tight hi-hat work, and wonderful tom fills. The real test on these power-pop tunes is tempo, and Potter never strays. I can guarantee that this guy is sweating through his shirt after a few songs. (www.petlovermusic.com)

Drummer **ED TOTH** of Vertical Horizon has done it again on *Go*. Each tune is driven by Toth's ability to create tension in those pensive moments with a simple side-stick. Then as the chorus hits, so does Toth—with everything he's got. Toth's kit also sounds amazing. If rock music had more drummers like Toth, radio would be a happier place. (RCA)

DEREK is one of those drummers who is so much a part of the song, he doesn't care what it sounds like. The High Strung's newest release, *These Are Good Times*, lends itself to Derek's excitement. With an earlier Who sound to their music, these tunes are a drummer's playground. Every tom and cymbal is banged and smashed with a cool laid-back and almost spastic feel—contradiction is part of the fun! (Tee Pee) **Fran Azzarto**

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SIGNIFICANT REISSUES Santana, Traffic

In slightly expanded editions, the reissue of Santana's *Caravanserai*, *Welcome*, and *Moonflower* and the Carlos Santana/John McLaughlin duet *Love Devotion Surrender* sound remarkably hot thirty years after their initial release. **MICHAEL SHRIEVE** is the sparkplug that sets Santana turning, driving the festive music with chattering rim clicks and galvanic tom work in cosmically flowing rhythms. Far from the polished productions of Santana's current music, these recordings are deeply tactile. Performances by **DON ALIAS**, **BILLY COBHAM**, **JAN HAMMER**, **TONY SMITH**, and the undervalued **GRAHAM LEAR** included. (Sony/Legacy)

Seventies psychedelic/folk/jazz/rock group Traffic seemed to improve with age. The original band's final recordings, *Shoot Out At The Fantasy Factory*, *On The Road*, and *When The Eagle Flies*, find drummer/lyricist **JIM CAPALDI** laying down his sticky, svelte style with an original sense of rock swing. Taking center stage for *On The Road*, Capaldi handed the sticks to legendary session drummer **ROGER HAWKINS**, who plays with a fusion precision here that contradicts the looser funk of his Aretha Franklin work. (Island)

Ken Micallef

MXPX

Before Everything And After (A&M)

Washington pop-punks MXPX have had plenty of time to cut their teeth, releasing their debut while still in their mid-teens. Now polished twenty-something vets with their third A&M-released full-length, *Before Everything And After*, the act (and specifically drummer **YURI RULEY**) seem to have expunged any blemishes of yore. Ruley's fully in command now, whether it's the swingy pop of "Well Adjusted," the Beatle-esque walk of "Quit Your Life," or his signature double-timed hustle of "The Capitol." Ruley's experience pays off as well; he's developed a consistent and calculated playing style that makes for strong and complete performance here.

Waleed Rashidi

Johannes Mossinger New York Trio

Monk's Corner (double moon/challenge)

On this mix of Thelonious Monk tunes and originals, drummer **KARL LATHAM** is subtle and supportive of Johannes Mossinger's melodic and angular piano. Latham has a feel on drums that offers plenty of nice shading and accents, reacting as part of the trio and propelling things forward. Check out the post-bop interpretation of "Bemsha Swing," for example, or the funky take on "Well You Needn't." And on "Brilliant Corners," which features guest sax from **Joe Lovano**, Latham delivers a surging solo filled with rolls and punctuations. Whether playing it delicate or groovy, Mossinger's trio consistently displays strong ideas.

Martin Patmos

Carl Palmer

Do Ya Wanna Play, Carl? (Sanctuary)
Working Live, Volume One (Victor)

Fans of classical rock trio ELP's innovative and dominant Carl Palmer now have the opportunity to relive the drummer's shining moments. Disc one of *Do Ya Wanna Play, Carl?* highlights ELP pieces that featured Palmer's fluid rudimental chops and blazing speed. Disc two rewinds to a fifteen-year-old Palmer's Keith Moon-ish flailing with The Craig, tracks from Atomic Rooster, '80s super-group Asia, Mike Oldfield, 3, Palmer's PM, Qango, and even The Buddy Rich Orchestra. On *Working Live, Volume One*, Palmer proves he still has the fire. Here, Palmer's current power trio with **Shaun Baxter** (guitar) and **Dave Marks** (bass) performs the music of ELP, and Carl sounds truly energized, with his strongest groove playing to date. The disc closes with an impressive six-plus-minute drum solo. Recommended. (www.carlpalmer.com)

Mike Haid

The Lizards Rule (hyperspace)

Here's an unfortunate case of mistaken identity. The music seems to be playing a game of tug-of-war between Fabulous Thunderbirds-style blues rock and Zeppelin-meets-Mountain hard rock. In either case, **BOBBY RONDINELLI**'s drumming is powerful and in your face, with great rock chops and strong fills. The mix is solid and the drums are heavy and up front. The problem is that these guys would be too much for a traditional blues audience but not modern-sounding enough for today's heavy rock audience. Good music, but it's going to be difficult to find the market to sell this to. (www.thelizardswebsite.com)

Mike Haid

STRING ALONG

King Johnson, Joe Bonamassa, Greg Koch

Guitarist **Oliver Wood** is the creative spark, but drummer **GREG BABA** propels the many rhythms of King Johnson on *Hot Fish Laundry Mat*. It's a fun ride through half-time funk, second line, boogie, and jazzy rock. The band's addition of percussionist **CHRIS UHLER** is a good move, throwing in a little more rhythmic grease. They even have a song, and a word, that describes their sound—"Adultcontemporaryrootsrockblues jazzfunk." (Landslide)

Drummer **KENNY KRAMME** has a challenging job on guitar whiz **Joe Bonamassa**'s *So It's Like That*, charging headfirst into rock, pop, progressive, and even old-school R&B. Kramme picks his spots well, then lets licks fly with passion. A worthy foil for the guitarist's pyrotechnics, Kramme drives a band, can turn on a dime, and enjoys stretching out. (Medalist)

Finally, guitarist Greg Koch offers the clever heavy rock concept album *Radio Free Gristle*, with drummers **JOHN CALARCO** and **JOE MORRIS** providing the muscle. "Chopin's Redneck Hideaway" is phat and funky, "Mulligatawny Delta" is an interesting "Eastern" concoction, and "Torn Asunder" is a beautiful Fripp-ish instrumental rock ballad. Some tracks are on the sterile side, some sparkle with country and jazz shadings. Throughout, the drummers know what to do. (Favored Nations)

Robin Tolleson

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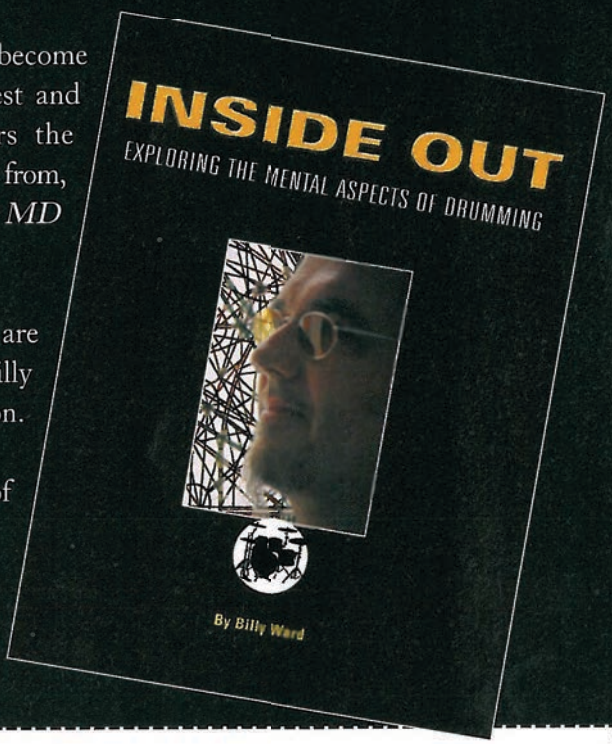

Now with *Inside Out*, many of Ward's most compelling articles are available from one source. Making the book even more valuable, Billy has written several new pieces, exclusively for this special publication.

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Arch Enemy

Anthems Of Rebellion (Century Media)

On the fifth album by Sweden's Arch Enemy, **Angela Gossow** roars, shrieks, and gurgles her way through expertly crafted tunes filled with dazzling riffs and the extremely powerful and polished drumming of **DANIEL ERLANDSSON**. Throughout, Erlandsson's taut, intriguingly timed rhythms give the band something to tear into. Arch Enemy are more melodic and proggy than usual here, yet there's no shortage of bad-ass metal in the grooves. Witness how the solemn classical guitar piece "Marching On A Dead End Road" plunges right into the frothing head-banger "Despicable Heroes." Beastly and beautiful.

Jeff Perlah

Jason Moran

The Bandwagon (Blue Note)

Holding court on the hallowed stage of NYC jazz mecca The Village Vanguard, Jason Moran's versatile young piano trio shows its mastery of tension and release. Abstraction dominates in pointillistic passages where the group buzzes like a giant hummingbird. But then, near the breaking point, they bust out a tasty shuffle or slide into an elegant Brahms intermezzo. **NASHEET WAITS** unleashes rolling waves of rhythm, rumbling around his kit in furious bursts. When he's swinging, his ride-cymbal beat is tight and compact, and he does some crisp brushwork. He's also funky as hell when the spirit moves him.

Michael Parillo

Les DeMerle

Hittin' The Blue Notes Volume One (Origin)

Hittin' The Blue Notes covers a few of the classic Blue Note recordings of the past, and the charismatic, dynamic drummer Les DeMerle wastes no time wailing around the drumkit right from the starting gate with the energetic first cut, "Just Friends." From there he swings into a Blakey jazz-shuffle (and vocals) on "Let The Good Times Roll." Later there's a short blazing drum solo featured on the track "If I Were A Bell," where Les shines in full bebop style. Fans of Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson will dig this CD. (www.lesdemerlemusic.com)

Billy Amendola

Airto Moreira

Life After That (Narada)

The immensely influential Airto returns with a long-awaited solo disc, placing percussion in the forefront more than ever. A Brazilian-inspired world brew spans diverse formats, from voices teamed with seven percussionists, to a percussion/didgeridoo trio, to a "beat box" track. Radiating through it all is Airto's signature irresistible spontaneity. One particular treat is a live ten-minute track capturing an Airto concert staple: an extended improvisation of pandeiro (Brazilian tambourine) and voice percussion. Although he's famous for his hundreds of instruments, all this artist needs is one small drum in hand to create and thrill.

Jeff Potter

DVDs

Extreme Drumming

by Marco Minnemann

(Warner Bros.)

level: advanced, $39.95

Following on the heels of his award-winning book/CD educational package *Extreme Interdependence*, German drumming sensation Marco Minnemann turns it loose on this mind-boggling 225-minute DVD. Marco unleashes his highly advanced drumset technique on astonishing solos, playing along to his complex jazz, rock, funk, and pop tracks. He also executes brilliant trio performances with pianist Steve Hamilton (Bruford's Earthworks) and bassist Wolfgang Schmid (Passport). Elsewhere, Marco impressively (and expressively) discusses and performs examples of his compositional and technical drumset concepts. Most interestingly, he explains how to create odd-meter ideas by playing along with spoken-word loops. The video production is entertaining and well-produced, and it includes loads of special features. But missing are the optional camera angles available on many of today's performance DVDs. That's a bit of a drag, as Marco throws out so many blinding licks at once, it's hard to keep up with everything he's doing from a single viewing point. Still, Minnemann is redefining the musical and technical aspects of drumset performance, and this lengthy disc chronicles his efforts well.

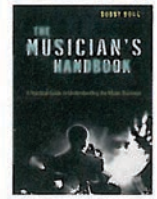
Mike Haid

BOOKS

The Musician's Handbook

by Bobby Borg (Billboard Books)

level: all, $19.95



A career as a musician is one of the most challenging a person could choose. So any advice on making that happen is appreciated. *The Musician's Handbook* is not just another "How To Get Rich As A Musician" tutorial; this is the real deal. Author Bobby Borg has a long drumming résumé that includes the popular '80s metal band Warrant. He's also a published music journalist. Consequently, each of this book's 288 pages is chock-full of tips for pursuing a music career, told clearly and smartly through one-on-one interviews with musicians and industry professionals. *The Musician's Handbook* can be used as a reference book. It can also be read from cover to cover. You'll probably do both.

Fran Azzarto

Drumsense

by Colin Woolway (Hal Leonard)

level: beginner, $12.95 each (with CD)

Drumsense doesn't offer anything more than other beginner drumming books in terms of information on how to play straight rock beats, shuffles, fills, and rudiments. It is, however, well organized, easy to follow, and user-friendly, which makes it one of the better beginner books you'll likely come across. *Drumsense* begins with useful rock and shuffle groove variations that lead into more complex patterns for building snare and bass drum independence, including off-beat ride and open hi-hat patterns. The next section adds simple fill ideas that flow in and out of the basic rock grooves. Woolway breaks his fill patterns into numbered subdivisions, with a graphic of each drum, so you get a visual of the number of times a pattern crosses each drum. On top of that, you've got a CD to follow along with, as Woolway slowly plays each example, then speeds it up a bit. The final chapter covers rolls and paradiddles. It would have been nice to hear all 26 rudiments, and a vocal cue before each example on the CD would have made this an even more effective learning tool, as it's easy to get lost if your reading skills are weak. Overall, though, this is a fine book for beginners.

Mike Haid

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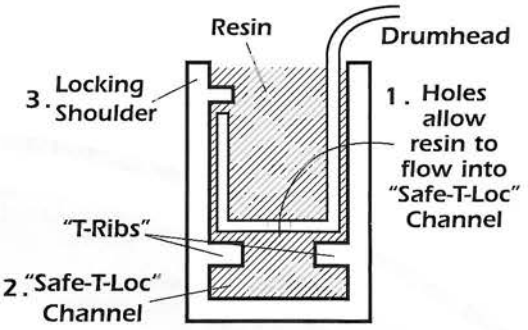

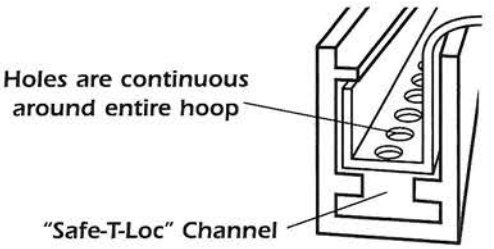

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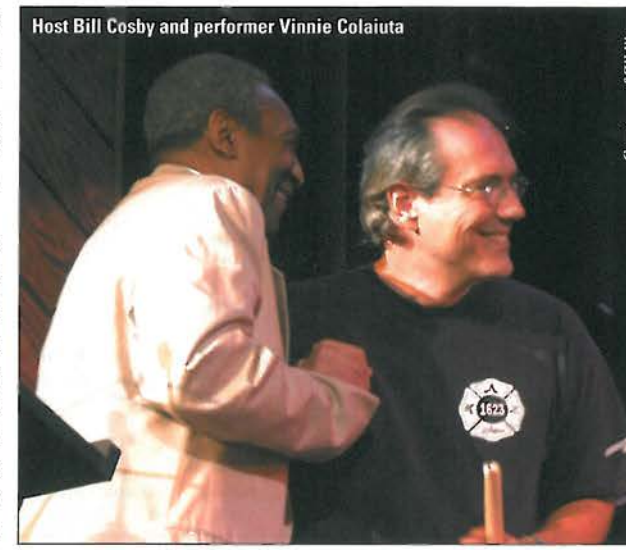
2003 American Drummers Achievement Awards

Honors and accolades were the order of the day at the 2003 American Drummers Achievement Awards, presented by the Zildjian company on Saturday, September 13 at the Berklee Performance Center in Boston. The event was held to honor drumming legend **Steve Gadd**, and to present a special tribute to Zildjian patriarch Armand Zildjian.

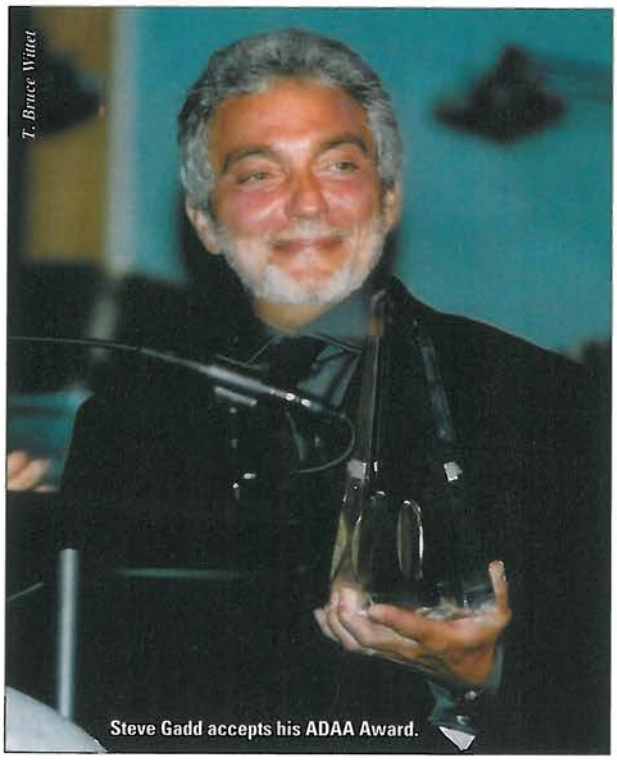
Zildjian CEO **Craigie Zildjian** greeted an audience filled with big-name drummers, major drum-industry figures, and Gadd fans of every description. After her opening welcome, Craigie introduced her sister **Debbie Zildjian**. Debbie spoke warmly about her father Armand before introducing his granddaughters **Cady**, **Emily**, and **Samantha Zildjian**.

Berklee College president **Lee Berk** offered comments about Armand Zildjian, citing his service and support to the college as a trustee and benefactor. Berk then introduced Armand's wife, **Mrs. "Andy" Zildjian**, who had the audience roaring at her humorous anecdotes about her late husband. A video tribute to Armand followed, illustrating the history and character of the colorful cymbal manufacturer.


Host Bill Cosby and performer Vinnie Colaiuta
Courtesy of Zildjian

Armand's son **Rab Zildjian** took the stage to begin the evening's celebration of Steve Gadd. He spoke of how much his father had loved and respected Steve, and how Steve was then and is now regarded as a member of the Zildjian family. Rab then introduced the evening's host, comedian and music aficionado **Bill Cosby**.

After his opening remarks (which quickly had the audience in stitches), Cosby introduced 1998 ADAA honoree **Louie Bellson**. Louie spoke of his first meeting with Steve Gadd, who played with Louie at a clinic at the Eastman School Of Music, where Steve was a student. "At that moment," said Louie, "I knew this was someone special." Louie then introduced the first part of a two-part video documenting Steve Gadd's amazing history.


T. Bruce Wittet
Steve Gadd accepts his ADAA Award.

Rick Marotta was up next, entertaining the audience with sardonic yet heartfelt comments expressing his admiration for Steve. Rick was then joined by an all-star band (**Jimmy Johnson** on bass, **Larry Goldings** on keyboards, **Mike Landau** on guitar, and **Tom Scott** on saxophones) to perform a musical tribute to Steve. Surprise guest **Will Lee** added bluesy vocals on a rousing rendition of "Watching The River Flow."

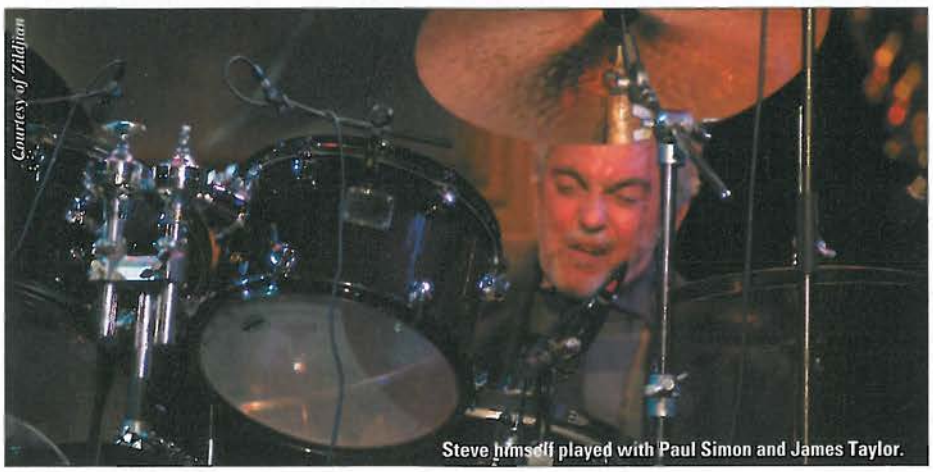
The first half of the program closed with an appearance by special guest **Paul Simon**. As Paul walked to his acoustic guitar at center stage, Steve Gadd himself appeared behind his drumkit. To the crowd's delight, the two musical giants dueted on a simple but dramatic rendition of the classic "Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover."

The program resumed with the second half of the video tribute to Steve. It was introduced by Steve's teacher at Eastman, noted percussionist/educator **John Beck**. This was followed by a surprise appearance by bassist (and long-time Gadd collaborator) **Anthony Jackson**. In a particularly eloquent tribute, the bassist described how Steve's unique approach to music continually caused him to reexamine his own perspective as a musician.

Vinnie Colaiuta next took the stage to perform with the band. They opened with a high-energy rendition of Chick Corea's challenging fusion classic "Nite Sprite." After performing a second tune (from the repertoire of Steve Gadd's famous '70s band Stuff), Vinnie told the audience that he was and always would be inspired by Steve's creativity and dedication to the

Courtesy of Zildjian

Rick Marotta played with a crack band in tribute to Steve.


Courtesy of Zildjian

Steve himself played with Paul Simon and James Taylor.

music. Vinnie then invited Rick Marotta back on stage, and the two performed a drumset duet on the Gadd composition "Duke's Lullaby."

Vinnie and Rick next called Steve himself on stage to receive his ADAA award. Speaking to the audience, Steve expressed his gratitude for being honored "for doing what I love to do." He went on to thank Zildjian, his family, and the entire drumming community, saying, "The way you feel about me is the way I feel about all of you. We're all in this together."

When special guest **James Taylor** came out to play, he told the audience, "This has been the best year of my life, largely because I've been playing with Steve so much." That association continued as Steve joined Taylor and the band to perform the title track from Taylor's most recent album, *October Road*. Then the group launched into the classic "Country Road," during which James and Steve combined for a vocal/drums funk break that brought the audience to its feet. The evening closed with Steve in the spotlight, playing an instrumental number with the band.

The American Drummers Achievement Awards pay tribute to America's legendary percussionists, while supporting the education of promising new students. The net proceeds from the awards show will endow scholarships in the names of Steve Gadd and Armand Zildjian at Berklee College Of Music.

Rick Van Horn

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New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

The 2003 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival offered an embarrassment of rhythmic riches. Throughout the week-long event, it seemed that everywhere you turned there was beautiful, swinging music being made. And that music featured many great home-grown drummers.

Among those outstanding drummers were **Shannon Powell** with the Newport All Stars, his own fine trio, and several other bands, **Ricky Sebastian** and percussionist **Bill Summers** with Los Hombres Calientes, **Mean Willie Green** with the amazing Neville Brothers, the very funky **Terence Higgins** with The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, "king of the funky drums" **Zigaboo Modeliste** with several fine groups, the soulful and funky **Raymond Weber**, **Kenneth Blevins** with John Hiatt's Goners, **Bunchy Johnson** with Allen Toussaint, traditional jazz greats **Ernie Eli** and **Bob French**, **Lionel Battiste** (bass drummer with the great Treme Brass Band), **Jamal Battiste** and **Russell Battiste**, **Johnny Vidacovich** with Astral Project, and funk master **Herman Ernest** with Dr. John.

As always, there was also an array of top-notch national jazz, blues, and rock groups represented. A few of the non-local drumming greats who could be heard included **Chico Hamilton** with his own fine group, **Mike Clark** with several excellent bands including The Headhunters, **Cody Dickinson** with The North Mississippi All Stars, and **Nir Zidkiyahu** with John Mayer.

In no other place do so many great drummers come together to perform in so many varied styles of music. And it makes perfect sense for it all to happen in New Orleans, where the drumset originated in the first place.

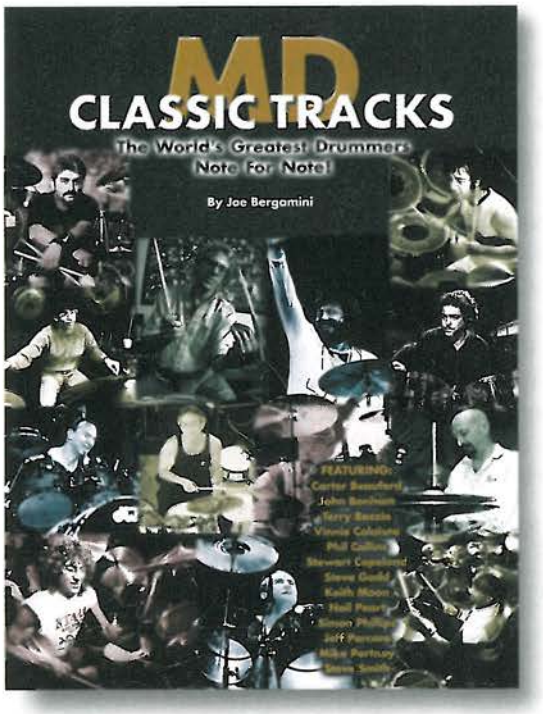
Story by Paul Siegel
Photos by Clayton Call

New From The Modern Drummer Book Division

MD Classic Tracks

The World's Greatest Drummers Note For Note!

By Joe Bergamini



With *MD Classic Tracks*, drummer/author/educator Joe Bergamini has put together an impressive collection of never-before-seen transcriptions. This work features some of the best-loved performances by a few of the greatest drummers ever to pick up sticks. Also included with the note-perfect transcriptions are rare photos and revealing, in-depth descriptions of the drummers and their playing.

***MD Classic Tracks* gives an inside look at some of the true legends of the instrument. Included in the book are:**

John Bonham: Led Zeppelin's "Out On The Tiles"
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Simon Phillips: Jeff Beck's "Space Boogie"
Neil Peart: Rush's "The Camera Eye"
Jeff Porcaro: Toto's "Rosanna"
Terry Bozzio: Jeff Beck's "Sling Shot"
Vinnie Colaiuta: "I'm Tweeked" (from his self-titled solo album)
Mike Portnoy: Dream Theater's "6:00"
Steve Smith: Journey's "One More"
Carter Beauford: The Dave Matthews Band's "Tripping Billies"

"*MD Classic Tracks* is designed as a reference, a learning tool for the contemporary drummer. In its pages you'll find the exact drum parts that drummers have been inspired by for years."—**Joe Bergamini**

"This collection of transcriptions is a huge aid in understanding these artists' thoughts. These songs are important to learn from."—**Dom Famularo, Drumming Great**

Also, hear Joe Bergamini on *Radio Waves Goodbye*, the latest CD from his band 4Front, available at **www.joebergamini.com.**

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Berkfest 2003

For the sixth year in a row, thousands of music fans traveled to the hills of western Massachusetts for the Berkshire Mountain Music Festival, held August 15 through 17 in Great Barrington. Berkfest always features a wide variety of jazz, fusion, and funk acts, and this year was no exception.

Billy Martin headlined with Medeski Martin & Wood. Their set was an experimental jazz-funk romp highlighted by Billy's solo on a cover of the classic "Afro Blue."

Stanton Moore's set with New Orleans swamp-jazzers Galactic on Saturday evening was the musical pinnacle of the entire weekend. Fresh out of the recording studio with producer Dan "The Automator" Nakamura, Galactic has a whole stable of new songs driven by Stanton's heavy funk beats. Mixing loop-intensive new technology with Galactic's traditional funk grooves has "rejuvenated the band," according to Stanton. Galactic has never sounded better.

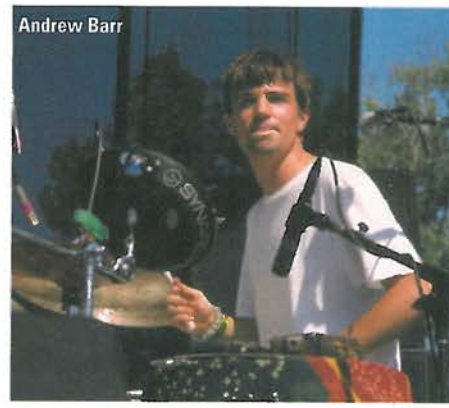
After Galactic dropped festival-goers' jaws, The Flaming Lips blew their minds with twisted psychedelic pop and a spectacular stage show. With a giant video screen behind them and flanked by people in animal costumes, The Lips delivered the goods in one of the festival's most anticipated sets. **Kliph Scurlock**, the Lips' touring drummer, supplied a Bonham-esque backbeat, while studio drummer/multi-instrumentalist **Steven Drozd** played keyboard and guitars.

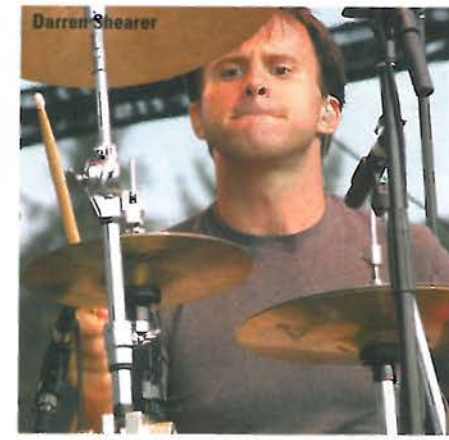
Some of Berkfest's best performances came from less famous drummers, like **Andrew Barr** from Rhode Island's The Slip. Andrew's kitchen-sink approach perfectly complements The Slip's chameleon-like style shifts. This included playing on a self-made pitched PVC pipe instrument, using the soundman's flip-flops. The Slip also played a set late on Saturday night and a mic'-less impromptu set on Sunday afternoon.

Another young drummer who kept busy was **Jason Smart** of Tulsa, Oklahoma's Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey. Hailed by *US News & World Report* as "The #1 new star of jazz in America," JFJO got a chance to further their reputation playing late-night and afternoon sets during which they hosted countless guest musicians. Drumming for the most musically bizarre act of the weekend, Smart blended abstract and concrete playing with stunning chops in a way that allowed the trio to experiment, groove, and turn heads.

On the other end of the spectrum is **Darren Shearer**, a human drum machine powering the high-octane live dance music of The New Deal. The

Billy Martin


Andrew Barr


Darren Shearer

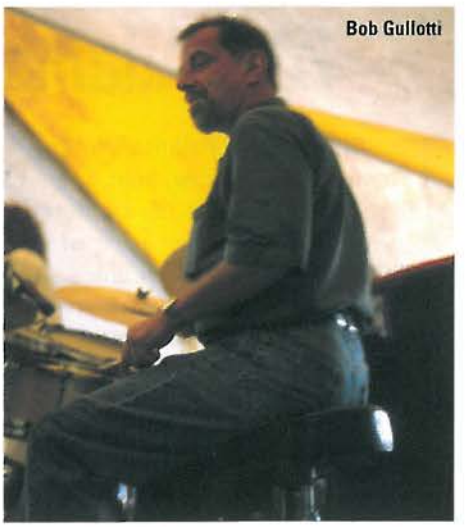
Stanton Moore

Jason Smart

Zach Velmer

best way to describe Darren's playing is "propulsive." With robotic precision and a tight snare drum, Darren laid down fast techno grooves that left the dancing crowd exhausted and exhilarated.

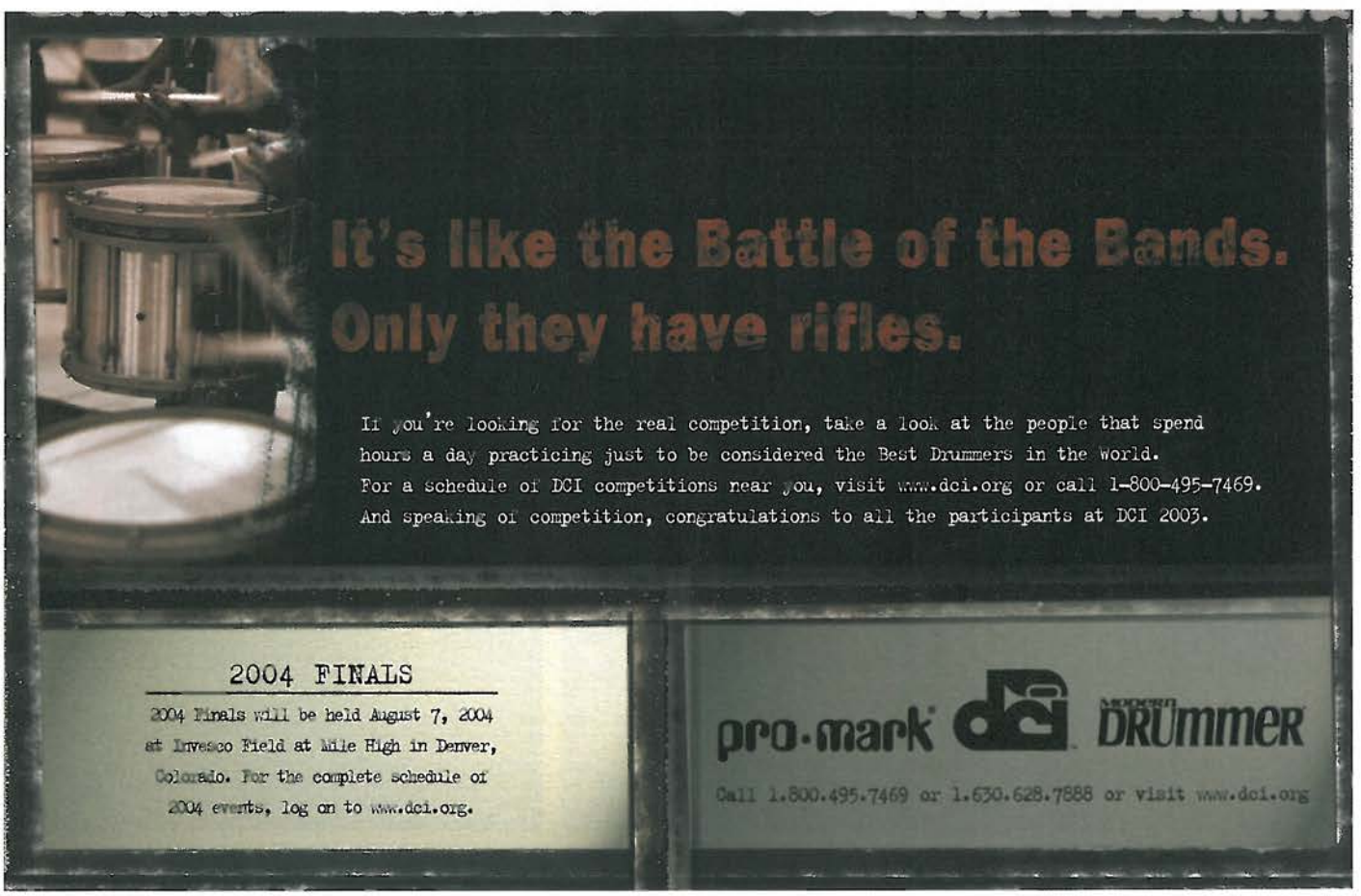
Derrek Phillips


Bob Gullotti

Another exciting new band combining electronic-sounding music with live instruments is Georgia's Sound Tribe Sector 9. If Darren Shearer sounds like a Roland 808, then STS9's **Zach Velmer** sounds like a good sampler and some great records. Featuring a warm drum sound and seriously funky grooves, Velmer had the crowd moving to his band's live trance music. Along with percussionist **Jeffree Lerner**, Zach creates a strong foundation for Sound Tribe's uplifting soundscapes.

Drummers also appearing at this year's Berkfest were **Joe Russo** of The Benevento-Russo Duo, **Bob Gullotti**, **Gregorio Vento**, and **Damian Pabro** of The Cuban Free Jazz Project, **Andy Sanesi** of Fuzz and The Gratuitous Sextet, **Derrek Phillips** of The Charlie Hunter Trio, **Zak Najor** of The Greyboy Allstars, **Tommy Benedetti** of John Brown's Body, and **Rodney Holmes** of The Steve Kimock Band.

Story by Mike Lang
Photos by Peter Lang



2003 Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drum Show

The fifth annual Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drum Show, held August 2 at the Atlanta Ramada Inn Conference Center, offered a plethora of collectibles to those in attendance. Billy and Bruce Jeansonne of Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drums and *Vintage Drummer* magazine have sponsored the ever-growing show since 1999. This year's exhibitors included Mike Balkom, Matt Sinyard, Michael Gilbert, Palmetto Music, Indoor Storm, Richard Wheeler, Bosphorus Cymbals, John Sheridan, Paul Montineri, Rebeats, Lauderdale Wind, Acoustic Woods, Lee Ruff, Atlanta Vintage Drums, Guitar Center, Jack Dukes Drum School, Layne Bayliss, Rick Malkin, Delmar Axton, Bob Stetnicka, and James Meadows. A Black Beauty snare donated by Ludwig was raffled, and door prizes donated by Pro-Mark were given out all day.

On display was an abundance of vintage snare drums dating back to the 1920s. Drums of practically every model, design, and finish from Ludwig, Rogers, and Slingerland could be found. Most notable was a mint-condition '20s-era Ludwig Black Beauty snare with the trademark floral design, valued between $3,000 and $4,000.

There were also several rare and vintage drumkits. John Hayes of Acoustic Woods presented a unique custom purple lacquer kit with a musical "f" hole cut in the shells as a vent hole. The rarest kits on display consisted of a late-'40s Kent student set, a 1950s Gretsch Starlight Sparkle set, a 1960s Slingerland Stage band set in Blue Ripple, and a mid- to late-'70s Slingerland kit in a Cordova finish.

Attending for his fifth straight year, William F. Ludwig II signed autographs, posed for photos, and shared stories of his many years as one of the world's leading drum manufacturers. I had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Ludwig about how Ringo Starr helped change the course of Ludwig drumset sales overnight. He also had some interesting stories of working with the legendary Buddy Rich.

Another highlight of this year's show was a rare drum clinic with Keith Thibodeaux, who played child drummer "Little Ricky" on the classic *I Love Lucy* television series. Keith has made a career playing drums, and he put on an impressive clinic. He also shared stories of working with Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball, and proudly displayed the vintage 1950s Gretsch kit given to him by Lucy.

There is much to be learned regarding the history and heritage of drummaking by attending vintage drum shows. The Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drum show is one of the finest in the country, and I encourage anyone who is truly interested in drumming to attend future shows.

Story and photos by Mike Haid

1950s Gretsch Starlight Sparkle set

'20s-era Ludwig Black Beauty

On display were dozens of classic and vintage snare drums

1960s Slingerland Stage band set in Blue Ripple

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2003 DCI World Championship Results

The **Blue Devils** drum & bugle corps from Concord, California won an unprecedented eleventh world title at the 2003 Drum Corps International (DCI) World Championships in Orlando, Florida this past August 9.

The Blue Devils' program, "The Phenomenon Of Cool," featured music of Dave Brubeck ("Take Five" and "Blue Rondo A La Turk") and Leonard Bernstein ("Cool" from *West Side Story*). In one of the highlights of their show, the drummers played on a movable "rack" of twenty-seven cymbals, performing complicated drill maneuvers while never missing a beat.

Although placing third overall, the **Cadets Of Bergen County** (from Bergenfield, New Jersey) won their third consecutive "High Drums" trophy (officially called the "Fred Sanford Award For Best Percussion Performance"). The Cadets' program ranged from orchestral motifs to big band renditions à la Stan Kenton.

Earlier in the week, Sponsors Of Musical Enrichment (S.O.M.E.) hosted the Individual & Ensemble competition, which allowed soloists and ensembles to compete independently from their corps. Best Individual Snare went to **Joe Hobbs** of Southwind (93.50), and the Multi-Tenor Award went to **Tim Jackson** of The Blue Devils (99). For the second year in a row, The Cavaliers' **Ray Laffoon** scored a 98 to win Best Individual Keyboard, while the Timpani trophy was awarded to **Jamey Ellisor** of Carolina Crown (94). The Best Multi-Percussionist award went to **Donny Saviak** of Allegiance Elite (82.50).

Carolina Crown (from Fort Mill, South Carolina) won the Percussion Ensemble and Bass Drum Ensemble awards. **Spirit Of JSU** (Jacksonville State University) captured Best Cymbal Ensemble.

The 2004 World Championships (August 5-7) will return to Denver, Colorado for the first time since 1979. For more information on drum & bugle corps, write to DCI at 470 South Irmen Drive, Addison, IL 60101, call (800) 495-7469, or surf to www.dci.org.

Lauren Vogel Weiss

Overall 2003 DCI Championship Results

Corps	Score (out of 100)	Drum Score (out of 10)
1. Blue Devils	98.80	9.65 (3rd)
2. Cavaliers	97.25	9.60 (4th)
3. Cadets Of Bergen County	97.10	9.85 (1st)
4. Phantom Regiment	94.75	9.50 (5th)
5. Santa Clara Vanguard	94.70	9.70 (2nd)
6. Boston Crusaders	90.95	9.10 (8th)
7. Bluecoats	90.75	9.40 (6th)
8. Madison Scouts	89.55	8.60 (10th)
9. Crossmen	86.90	9.30 (7th)
10. Carolina Crown	86.65	8.45 (12th)
11. Magic Of Orlando	85.60	8.95 (9th)
12. Spirit Of JSU	84.40	8.55 (11th)

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Indy Quickies

Modern Drummer senior editor Rick Van Horn recently visited Philadelphia's University Of The Arts School Of Music to participate in a seminar on music careers, conduct private lessons, and give a clinic. Rick is shown here with School Of Music director Marc Dicciani (at right), offering tips to a student at the clinic.

Www.SupportMusic.com is a Web site dedicated to helping parents and educators find ways to save music education in their children's schools. According to the Music Education Coalition, spring 2003 budget cuts could leave as many as thirty million students without music education. Increased budget and curriculum cuts in fall of 2003 will likely drive that percentage even higher, despite clear evidence that music education leads to better math, science, and SAT scores.

SupportMusic.com provides information and links to a variety of resources that can be used to customize campaigns in favor of local music programs. The effort has support from high-profile musical artists including studio drumming great **Harvey Mason**, along with US senator Mary Landrieu, representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham, and many major music organizations.

The Rhythmic Arts Project (TRAP) will hold its annual benefit on December 7 at The Los Angeles Music Academy, 370 South Fairoaks Blvd., Pasadena, California. TRAP is an organization dedicated to aiding special-needs individuals through rhythmic and musical activities. Past events have featured Vinnie Colaiuta, Airto, Luis Conte, Richie "Gajate" Garcia, Ralph Humphrey, Joe Porcaro, Mike Shapiro, Ronnie Gutierrez, Chalo, Carmine Appice, and Gary Novak. Many of the same great players are expected this year, as well as a great musical lineup with Kevyn Lettau and others. Details are available at www.traponline.com.

Quick Beats

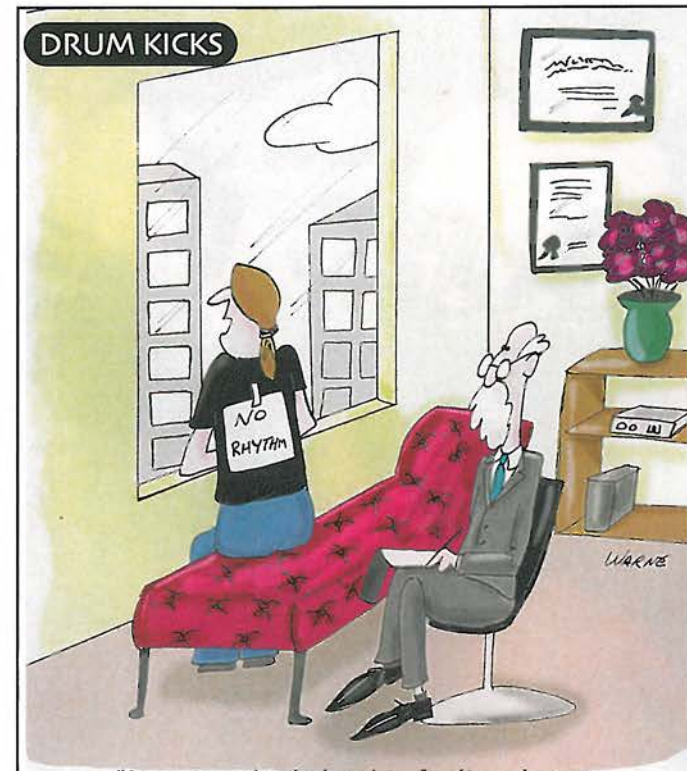
Sandy Gennaro

(Pat Travers, Joan Jett, The Monkees)

What are some of your favorite grooves?
John Bonham on "Fool In The Rain" (Led Zeppelin), Bernard Purdie on "Rock Steady" (Aretha Franklin), David Garibaldi on "What Is Hip?" (Tower Of Power), Melvin Parker & Clyde Stubblefield on "Sex Machine" (James Brown), Alan White on "Imagine" (John Lennon), Phil Rudd on "Back In Black" (AC/DC), and Mitch Mitchell on "Crosstown Traffic" (Jimi Hendrix).

What's your favorite TV theme music?
Sanford & Son (written and produced by Quincy Jones), *Barney Miller*, and *Mission Impossible*.

If you could put together an imaginary superband, who would be in it?
John Lennon and George Harrison on guitar, Paul McCartney on bass—and *me* on drums.



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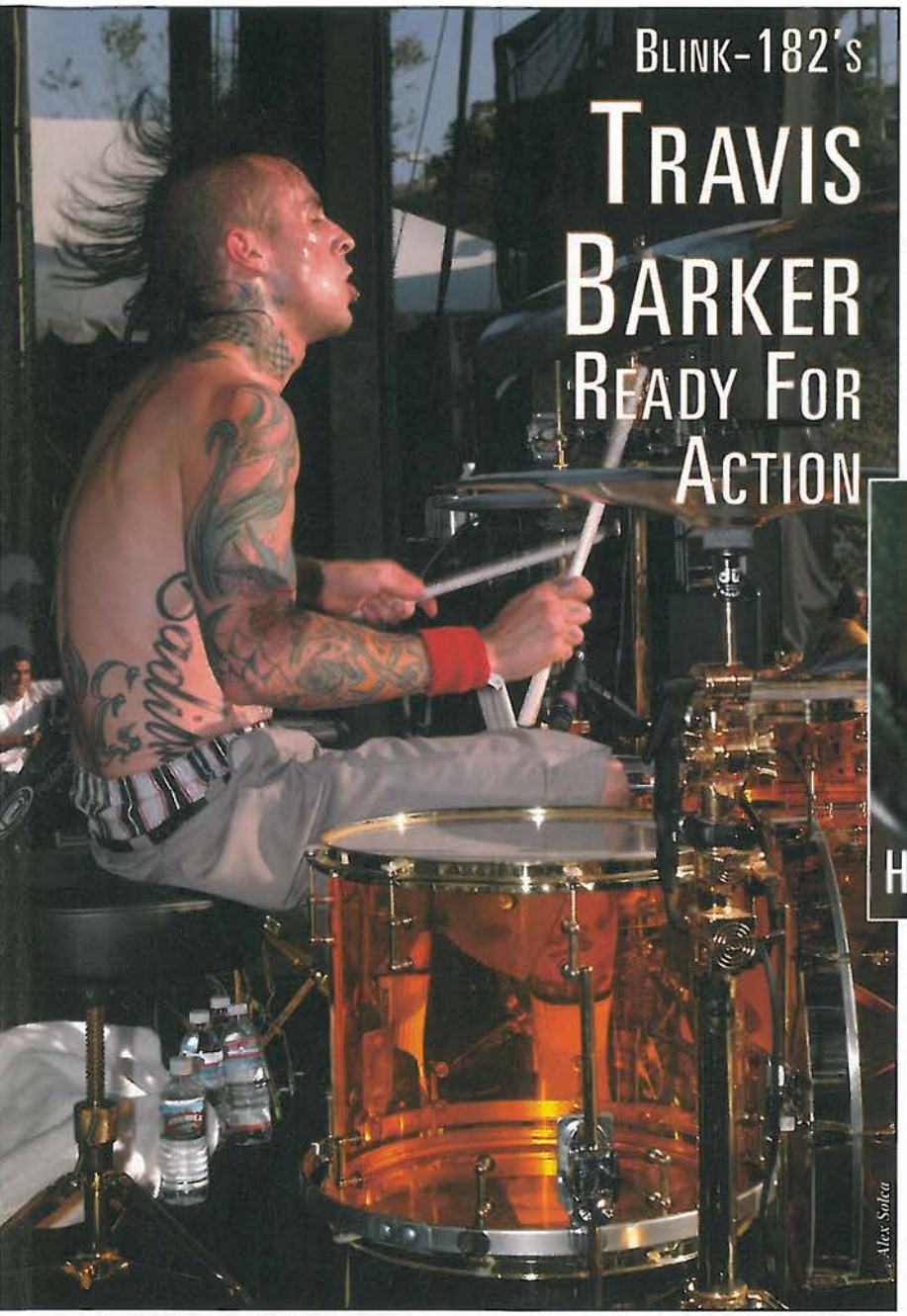

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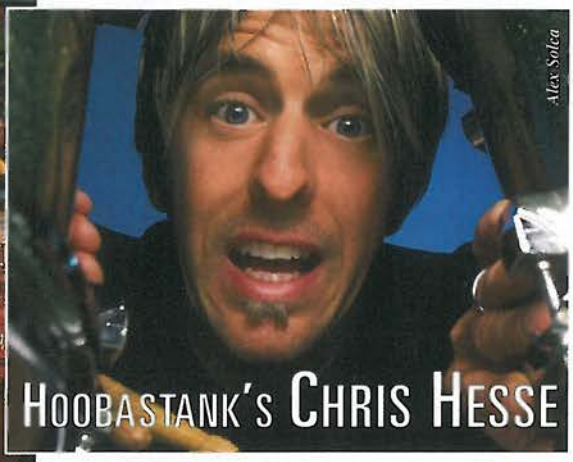

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MORGAN ROSE

reviews rockstar. taps tymps.

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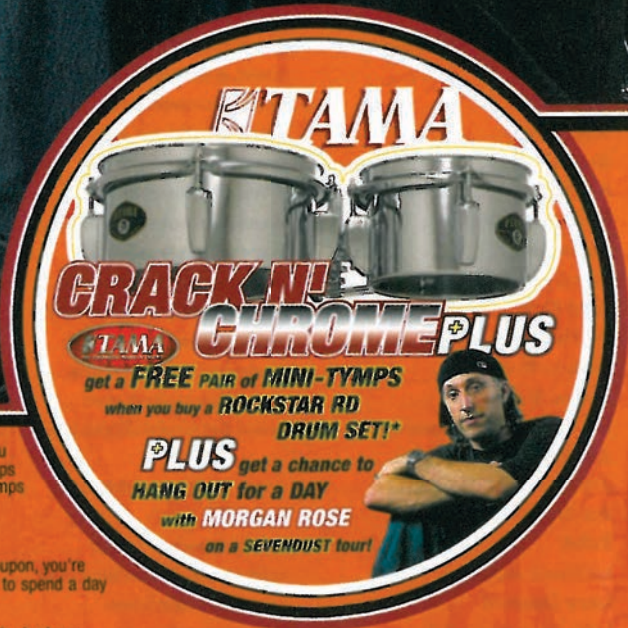

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For contest start and end dates, eligibility odds, and prizing, see the official rules at www.ModernDrummer.com. Must be a US resident to enter. Contest ends November 30, 2003. Grand Prize winner to be announced by December 31, 2003. See contest entry page at ModernDrummer.com for complete rules

MODERN DRUMMER

Not So Quiet On The Set!

Veteran studio and touring drummer/percussionist David Sears of Canoga Park, California prepared this kit for his performance with E.M.V.F. (Electro-Magnetic Vacuum Flux) for an upcoming 65-mm Cinerama film called *Movies For Your Ears*. David's job was to provide, in one live take, the sounds usually created in multiple takes for movie soundtracks.

The outfit consists of eight concert toms, a 14" double-headed rack tom, one 16" and two 18" floor toms, and a 26" bass drum (all Ludwig stainless-steel), a 26" Thundertom, a 14" Ludwig metal snare, one original Remo RotoTom, a selection of ten Paiste Rude 3000 cymbals, four Paiste tam tams, two Paiste tuned gongs, one brass dinner gong, five triangles, one set of five classic Thailand temple blocks, four cowbells of various makes and sizes, and one authentic 55-lb. church bell.

Hooray for Hollywood!

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE DAY,
NOTHING CAN BEAT PLAYING A LIVE SHOW
IN FRONT OF THE BEST FANS IN THE WORLD,
ON THE BEST DRUMS IN THE WORLD.

Linkin Park's Rob Bourdon loves to play live on Gretsch Drums -
18 X 22 bass, 8 X 10 and 9 X 12 mounted toms,
16 X 16 and 16 X 18 floor toms,
5 X 14 snare in Custom Graphic Finish.

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